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World population implosion?

NICHOLAS EBERSTADT

OVER the past several years, some of the world's best demographers have begun a dramatic reassessment of the world's demographic future. They are now seriously proposing the possibility that the world's population rather than continuing to increase will in our lifetimes peak, and then commence an indefinite decline in the generations immediately ahead. This demographic scenario is implicitly reflected in, among other places, the United Nations Population Division's biennial compendium, *World Population Prospects*—the oldest, largest, and most intensive of various contemporary attempts to envision and outline likely future demographic trends. The forthcoming edition of that volume, *The 1996 Revision*, will include "low variant" projections that anticipate zero population growth for the world as a whole by

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the year 2040, and negative growth—that is to say, depopulation—thereafter.

Like two alternative projections ("medium" and "high") also offered, this "low variant," as previous editions of the study have explained, is "thought to provide reasonable and plausible future trends." And the eventual global depopulation envisioned in these projections, one should emphasize, is not calamitous—it does not result from Malthusian, environmental, or any other variety of disaster. Just the contrary: This contemplated stabilization and ultimate decline of world population is assumed to occur under what *World Population Prospects* terms "conditions of orderly progress." The UN Population Division's method, in fact, specifically posits that "catastrophes such as wars, famines or new epidemics" will not take place "during the projection period."

The UN's new "low variant" projections do not, of course, provide a sure vision of the future. But they do offer a glimpse of one *particular*, and by no means fantastic, version of the future—a version, as yet, whose outlines have scarcely been described and whose ramifications have scarcely been pondered. At a time when all manner of potential "population problems" are regularly accorded official attention by national and international authorities, the neglect that has to date greeted the possibility of a long-term reduction of human numbers is all the more striking.

In the following pages, we will survey the demographic contours of a world in which population has ceased to increase and examine some of the political, economic, and social implications that might flow from a global "population implosion" a few decades from now. (The new UN "low variant" projections will be our backdrop.) Unaccustomed as we may be to thinking about such a world, its advent might not be that far off. The UN projections in question imagine an indefinite demographic descent commencing just over 40 years from now—a time at which most of the earth's current inhabitants will likely still be alive.

The limits of population forecasting

This is not, to be sure, the first time that population specialists or others have raised the prospect of long-term popu-

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lation decline. Some 60 years ago, expectations of an imminent depopulation were widespread in the Western world. In the 1930s, in fact, "the fear of population decline," to use Michael S. Teitelbaum and Jay M. Winter's phrase, was palpable in a number of European countries—or at least in their leading political and intellectual circles. We now know that those predictions of depopulation were far off the mark. Indeed, at the very time when they were supposed to be entering into permanent negative growth due to sub-replacement fertility—the decades of the 1950s and 1960s—Western countries actually turned out to be in the midst of a demographic surge driven by a post-war baby boom.

Thus a few general words of warning about demographic projections and forecasts are in order. The uninitiated sometimes invest unwarranted confidence in the capabilities of population sciences to chart accurately the demographic trends of tomorrow. Those more familiar with the disciplines in question entertain more modest hopes. The paradox of long-term demographic forecasting is that its methods combine superb technique with an almost complete lack of viable predictive theory.

Mathematical demography is an elegant and sophisticated construct; supplied with the necessary assumptions, it can generate detailed and internally consistent population projections. Those assumptions, unfortunately, are precisely the sticking point. For mathematical demography will easily demonstrate that, under non-catastrophic conditions, change and composition within any convened population will be dominated by fertility trends—but the population sciences offer no reliable framework for anticipating the fertility trends of the future.

In the modern era, the defining essence of fertility change has been the emergence and spread of sustained fertility decline. Yet the phenomenon of secular fertility decline has posed unanswerable questions from the beginning. The first country in the world to embark upon long-term fertility decline did so in the late eighteenth century. That country, however, was not industrializing England, as modernization theories would lead us to expect, but rather France—then impoverished, overwhelmingly agrarian, predominantly illiterate, and, by appearances, devoutly Catholic. Charles Tilly of the New School for

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Social Research has described the dilemma that European fertility decline continues to pose to historians and social scientists: "The problem is that we have too many explanations which are individually plausible in general terms, which contradict each other to some degree, and which fail to fit some significant part of the facts."

More modern fertility trends have proved no less nettlesome. Despite the almost overwhelming availability of information on social and economic conditions in contemporary industrial societies, demographers were unable to foresee either the transnational postwar baby boom or the subsequent shift to a sub-replacement fertility regimen in every country belonging to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As for developing countries, demographers have been unable to forecast either the onset of fertility decline or the trajectory that fertility change follows once it begins.

Complicating any effort at long-range population projections are two additional and highly inconvenient details: Population theory offers no reliable indications as to how far "normal" fertility levels may fall—or whether fertility regimens will tend to converge toward net replacement after a pronounced swing away from it.

For better or worse, our only recourse in addressing these issues is to consult the empirical record. From that record, we know that the fertility level of a fairly large population under "conditions of orderly progress" can be very low indeed: Eastern Germany's post-unification fertility level, if continued, would be less than one birth per woman *per lifetime*. By the same token, we now know that a country's fertility can drop swiftly and dramatically once the process of secular fertility decline begins: Between the early 1960s and the early 1990s, for example, Thailand's estimated "total fertility rate" (TFR) plunged from over six births per woman per lifetime to less than two. We know further that sub-replacement fertility can characterize fairly poor contemporary societies—China, Cuba, and possibly Sri Lanka, among others. Finally, we know that fertility levels can remain below replacement for prolonged periods. Japan, for example, entered into sub-replacement fertility over 40 years ago and has been gradually moving further away from net replacement for the past quarter century. All these par-

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ticulars, however, furnish precious little guidance for long-range forecasts of population totals for any given country, much less the world as a whole.

Let us be clear: Demographic techniques are reasonably accurate for some kinds of forecasts. Under ordinary conditions, for example, they are rather good at predicting how many people from a current cohort will be alive a given number of years hence. (This insight is the basis of the modern life-insurance industry.) But no one has yet devised a sound technique for estimating the unborn in advance—and no one is likely to do so, so long as parental preferences determine human fertility patterns.

The "low variant" model

Now, back to the UN "low variant" projections. Since all population projections faithfully and mechanically reflect the assumptions embodied within them, it is worth examining the particular set of assumptions that bring us to the verge of a permanent depopulation 40-odd years from today.

The UN "low variant" model takes estimates of the world's current population composition (by country, age, and sex) and calculates hypothetical future populations based on three separate sorts of assumptions: migration, mortality, and fertility. For the period 1995 to 2000, the model envisions a net migration of about 1.6 million people a year to the "more developed regions" (meaning the OECD countries of the early 1990s, Eastern Europe, and the predominantly European portions of the former Soviet Union) from the "less developed regions" (everyone else); this stream gradually diminishes, ceasing altogether in 2025. These assumptions are clearly arbitrary; there is no particular reason to think they will be correct. However, given their magnitude, these assumptions exert only a slight influence on population trends for the "more developed regions"—and, of course, none at all on trends for the world as a whole.

With respect to mortality, the UN model assumes that life expectancy at birth will rise in the "more developed regions" from roughly 75 today to 81 in the year 2050. For the "less developed regions," life expectancy is assumed to increase from the current estimated level of 64 to 76 by 2050; in the "least

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developed countries" (a sub-grouping composed mainly of sub-Saharan countries), it is seen as rising from 52 to 72. By the benchmarks of the immediate past, such improvements in longevity seem feasible—and perhaps even modest. In the 55 years between 1995 and 2050, life expectancy at birth for the world as a whole is posited to rise by 12 years (from about 65 to about 77); by contrast, in the 45 years between 1950 and 1995, global life expectancy is thought to have risen by about 20 years (from about 45 to about 65).

The model's most important assumptions concern future fertility trends. By the UN's estimate, total fertility rates for the "more developed regions" averaged about 1.7 in the early 1990s; the "low variant" assumes these to have fallen to about 1.5 today, and estimates that they will stabilize in another decade at about 1.4 (roughly, the level currently characteristic of the nations of the European Union). For the "less developed regions," TFRs averaged perhaps 3.3 in the early 1990s; these are seen as having fallen just below three today, declining further to about two in 2020, and to about 1.6 in 2050. (For the "least developed countries," where the average number of births per woman per lifetime in the 1990s is estimated to have exceeded five, TFRs are posited to drop below four by 2010, below three by 2020, and below two by 2035.)

Another way to look at these fertility assumptions is from the vantage point of net replacement. In the "more developed regions," the "net reproduction rate" (NRR) is already down to about 0.7—*meaning that the next generation, under present patterns of childbearing and survival, would be about 30 percent smaller than the current one.* The UN "low variant" assumes that the NRR will stay close to its current level for the next half-century, registering just under 0.7 in 2050. The "less developed regions," in this vision, fall below replacement around 2010; the "least developed" sub-grouping fall below replacement around 2030. For the world as a whole, the NRR today is placed at over 1.2; global sub-replacement commences around 2010, and, by 2050, it is stipulated to be 0.74—or about the same as the NRR for today's industrial democracies.

What is one to make of these postulated fertility trends? One way to assess them is in historical perspective. Over the next half-century, the "low variant" model proposes a decline

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in TFRs of roughly 0.3 for the "more developed regions" and of about 1.5 for the "less developed regions." By contrast, over the 40 years between the early 1950s and the early 1990s, actual TFRs dropped by an average of about 1.1 in the "more developed regions" and by nearly three in the diverse amalgam of countries within the "less developed regions."

As we have already seen, there is no possible way of telling today whether or not these hypothetical "low variant" fertility trends will eventually come to pass. Against the mirror of recent history, however, the assumptions of fertility decline built into this particular population model look neither terribly radical nor especially heroic.

The arithmetic of depopulation

The arithmetic consequence of this bundle of assumptions—none of them outlandish—is a world in which population crests and then declines forever thereafter. By these particular computations, the human population would reach its apogee around the year 2040 at somewhat over 7.7 billion—about one-third more than the 5.8 billion thought to be alive today. Between 2040 and 2050, the world's population would fall by about 85 million. From then on, world population would shrink by roughly 25 percent with each successive generation.

Negative rates of "natural increase"—death rates higher than birth rates—would characterize the "more developed regions" as early as the year 2000, although thanks to modest net immigration, absolute population totals for these regions would not begin to fall until after 2005. For the "less developed regions," a negative natural increase would begin around the year 2045. Despite sub-replacement fertility in today's "least developed countries," population growth would continue for a decade or so beyond 2050. This would be due to "demographic momentum"—in other words, the fact that rising cohorts contained absolutely larger numbers of women of childbearing age would outweigh the fact that the fertility rate for these new cohorts was dropping.

The trends that would result in an ultimate global population decline would also bring about a significant redistribution of world population. In 1995, the ratio of population between "less developed" and "more developed" regions stood at about

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four to one; in 2050, by these projections, it would be seven to one. The balance of population would shift dramatically not only between given countries but even between entire continents. In 1995, for example, the estimated populations of Europe (including Russia) and Africa (including Egypt and the Maghreb states) were almost exactly equal. In 2050, by these projections, Africans would outnumber Europeans by over three to one.

TABLE 1
World's Most Populous Countries, 1950-2050 (Millions)

1950		1995		UN "low variant" projections for 2050	
China	555	China	1,222	India	1,231
India	358	India	929	China	1,198
USSR	180	USA	267	Pakistan	306
USA	152	Indonesia	197	Nigeria	279
Japan	84	Brazil	159	USA	272
Indonesia	80	Russian Fed.	148	Indonesia	251
Pakistan	72	Pakistan	136	Brazil	188
Brazil	53	Japan	125	Bangladesh	178
UK	51	Bangladesh	118	Ethiopia	176
W. Germany	50	Nigeria	112	Zaire	146
Italy	47	Mexico	91	Iran	143
France	42	Germany	82	Mexico	127

Note: 1950 reading adjusted to account for actual historical boundaries.
Source: United Nations Population Division

In the world of negative population growth, the profile of the most populous countries would also look rather different from the rankings with which we have become familiar. Only half the largest countries of 1950 would remain on the list for the year 2050. Nigeria, which did not even make the list for 1950, will be the world's fourth largest country in 2050—just edging out the United States. New additions to the big 12 between now and the year 2050, by these computations, would include Ethiopia, Zaire, and Iran. Whereas six of the 12 largest countries in 1950, and four in 1995, come from the "more

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developed regions," as currently defined, one—the United States—so qualifies by these projections in 2050. Just how demographically negligible the current industrial democracies would be in this version of the year 2050 may be illustrated with a single comparison: Not a single European state—including Russia—could match the Philippines in total population. Other things being equal—and admittedly, in world politics they seldom are—these trends presage a tremendous shift in the balance of global power.

These same demographic forces of longer lives and falling fertility would also inexorably pave the way for a radical aging of the human population—a shift of a magnitude with no historical precedent. Around 1900, the median age of the world's population may have been about 20 years—not far from what it had been in all earlier eras. Over the second half of the twentieth century, the median age for the world's population rose somewhat: By 1995, it reached about 25 years. By the year 2050, in this "low variant" world, the median age would be over 42.

In the "less developed regions," the median age would almost double between 1995 and 2050, jumping from 23 years to 41 years. To put this in perspective, it would mean that the "average" population from these regions would be more aged than the "greyest" populations in the world today. (In Germany and Japan, for example, median age is currently just under 40.) But the "more developed regions" of 2050 would be older still. In 2050, the median age in this area would exceed 51. In some countries, of course, the population would be even more aged: Japan's median age would be 53; Germany's, 55; Italy's 58.

This tremendous and rather sudden aging process would have subsidiary implications. For the world as a whole the number of children would sharply decline while there would be a population boom among the elderly (or let us say, groups *currently* considered elderly). In 1950, children under the age of five composed just under one-seventh of the global population. Today, they make up about one-ninth of the total. In 2050, by these projections, they would account for less than one-twentieth. Conversely, persons 65 and over made up about 5 percent of the world's population in 1950 and perhaps 6.5

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percent in 1995; they would account for over 18 percent of the total in 2050. Where there were two and one-half young children for every older person in the world in 1950, there would, by 2050, be almost four persons 65 or over for every child. In the "less developed regions," there would be three times as many older people as young children; in the "more developed regions," the ratio would be eight to one. In Italy, which serves in these projections as the extreme instance of demographic aging, barely 2 percent of the population in 2050 would be under the age of five, but more than 40 percent would be 65 or older.

This dramatic worldwide aging would especially affect the female population. For the first time in the modern era, and possibly the first time in human experience, "women of reproductive ages" would no longer constitute the norm for humanity. In 1995, an estimated 51 percent of all women on earth were between the ages of 15 and 49. (These are designated as the childbearing years by the conventions of contemporary demography—imprecisely, but not unreasonably.) Although accurate global counts are obviously not available for earlier periods (or even today), demographic technique suggests that one-half or more of the women alive at any given time may have been within those same childbearing years. Under "low variant" assumptions, however, by the year 2050 over 55 percent of the world's women will be outside the childbearing years. In the "more developed regions," nearly two-thirds of all women would not be "of reproductive age."

Finally, consider those between the ages of 15 and 24—the vigorous and exuberant adolescents and young adults who influence fashions and style, exemplify physical beauty, and happen to do most of the actual fighting in times of war. In the "low variant" version of the future, the size of this youthful group shrinks significantly in both relative and absolute terms. In the world as a whole, there would be 100 million fewer youths in 2050 than there were in 1995. While they had comprised 18 percent of the world's population in 1995, they would account for less than 12 percent by 2050. "More developed regions" would be especially without young people: Less than 9 percent of their population would be 15 to 24 years of age. In fact, barely one-half as many young people would be living in these countries as live there today.

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A global nursing home?

It is perhaps difficult to picture exactly how population decline would affect the routines of daily life, or social dynamics, or economic patterns, or the operations of government. Yet a number of issues present themselves immediately—along with a number of still unanswerable questions.

For example, the UN "low variant" projections envision a growth in human numbers between 1995 and 2050 of just under 2 billion; 1.4 billion of this presumed increase is accounted for by the group 60 years of age and older. A significant fraction of the world's population would, in this vision, be septuagenarians, octogenarians, and nonagenarians; in results calculated for some of the "more developed" countries, in fact, persons between the ages of 75 and 85 would outnumber those between the ages of 0 and 10.

Such a gerontological drift raises basic questions about the health of the societies of this particular future. Would a depopulating planet be a planet of wheelchairs—of increasingly infirm senior citizens whose escalating demands for medical services and care seriously burden the rest of society? Or would the revolution in longevity be accompanied by a revolution in health that effectively extended the boundaries of middle age—and thereby the scope for active, vigorous, and productive existence?

To address such questions, we might begin by examining the available research on health and aging. That literature, as it happens, is inconclusive—or more precisely, it points in opposite and mutually exclusive directions. According to one school of thought, the risk of illness and mortality changes are inversely related: Longer lives mean worse health for the survivors. The other school holds that improvements in life expectancy translate into greater life expectancy free from disability, even for persons in their seventies and early eighties.

Reviewing the points of controversy in these studies, one is inevitably struck by the mischievous ambiguity of the term "healthy life." "Mortality" is easy to define and thus (in theory) to measure; not so with "health," which has many gradations and is subjective anyway. It is possible, and indeed likely, that existing data on self-perceived health status are confounded

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by the higher expectations of those who are better off: In the United States and elsewhere, despite physical evidence to the contrary, more affluent and better educated people often seem more inclined than their less well off peers to rate their own health as unsatisfactory.

The international data, however, would seem to support the argument that improvements in "disability-free" life expectancy occur nearly as rapidly as improvements in life expectancy itself—at least for the population under 85 years of age and so long as "disability" is carefully and objectively defined. Indeed, proper health habits and appropriate medical help can already offer the great majority of persons the possibility of active and independent life well into their eighties. To this extent, anxieties about the coming of an era of dependent invalids would appear to be misplaced.

At the same time, we should remember that the quality of life for older persons may at times hinge upon discrete, but expensive, medical treatments. Insofar as such services would be more available in rich countries than in poor ones, even in the year 2050, differences in the health status of the elderly might in the future provide the same sort of summary index of "development" that the infant mortality rate is today taken to offer.

Economic performance

In the 1930s, when the specter of "depopulation" haunted Western intellectuals, many of the most eminent economists of the day—including Alvin Hansen, Roy Harrod, John Maynard Keynes, Gunnar Myrdal, and Joan Robinson—argued that low fertility and stagnant or declining population could compromise economic performance. By stifling demand, sluggish or negative population growth could exacerbate, or even precipitate, "underconsumption"—and a crisis of unemployment. At the very least, low fertility would press down the investment rate or slow the allocation of new labor into promising and productive areas.

With the benefit of hindsight, most of these arguments now look surprisingly weak. Depression-era economists were too ready to explain that great international slump—which was

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essentially non-demographic in nature—in terms of the fertility patterns and population trends of the day. (Ironically, barely a generation later eminent economists were attributing those same ills to overly rapid rates of population growth.) And the economists of the 1930s underestimated the role international trade might play in linking (and thus expanding) markets and in stimulating a productivity-enhancing division of labor, regardless of the population trends in a given country at a given time.

A careful review of the empirical record suggests that demographic forces, whatever their nature, need be no more than at most a secondary factor in overall economic performance. This empirical record suggests further that well thought-out public policies, in tandem with suitable private arrangements, can capitalize upon the potential opportunities inherent in a country's population trends. In fact, during the modern era nations have prospered even in the wake of seemingly calamitous "population problems." West Germany, Taiwan, and South Korea each flourished economically after their sudden, forced, and tumultuous absorption of millions of refugees; Japan enjoyed rapid and sustained development after World War II even though life expectancy for its men had been driven down to neolithic levels as a result of the war.

By comparison with such trials, the demographic challenges posed by gradual population aging, and eventual population decline, look decidedly modest. Indeed, there are reasons to be guardedly optimistic about the macroeconomic consequences of these trends. Surveying America's demographic prospects, for example, Harvard economist David M. Cutler and his colleagues have made the point that prolonged sub-replacement fertility would actually somewhat lower the country's investment needs and increase its living standards (consumption levels) since so much less capital would be required by new entrants into the labor force. Although expenditures on the care and support of the elderly would naturally rise, these costs would, in Cutler and his colleagues' reckoning, be substantially offset by a reduced need to spend on the young. In all, they conclude, the optimal savings rate in the middle of the next century would probably be slightly lower than the optimal savings rate today.

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The demographics of depopulation, however, might well pose one major and heretofore novel economic problem for societies of the future: the education and training of the workforce. In a world where nearly one-half of the population was living to the age of 80 or beyond, the ordinary person's "economically active life expectancy" could quite conceivably be as much as 50 years—or more. Given the arithmetic of sustained below-replacement fertility, moreover, it is not difficult to imagine circumstances half a century hence in which the majority of a country's workers were over the age of 50.

If future educational systems operated by today's principles, most people at work would have received their final formal training over a generation previously; they would be functioning with the knowledge and techniques of an increasingly distant past. One should not overstate the problem: On-the-job training, refresher courses, and the like are already familiar features of the modern workplace. The age-structure changes that negative population growth would bring, however, would considerably intensify the mismatch between an educational system designed to train people when they are young and the desire of workers to enjoy a long and worthwhile career in an increasingly complex economy.

Newly embodied knowledge and newly applied techniques have been a driving force behind material advance in our century. If they are to serve the same role in the coming century, and if the coming century proves to be a time of pervasive population decline, the institutions and routines of higher education will probably have to be fundamentally re-examined and recast.

Pressures on the welfare state

The possible cessation and decline of population growth in coming decades may pose no insuperable macroeconomic problems to future generations, but it stands to create enormous difficulties for the state. In a world like that imagined in the UN's "low variant" projections, governments would be subject to intense budgetary and political pressure to overhaul their welfare systems. Negative population growth would especially threaten the central feature of the modern welfare state: the

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nation-wide, tax-financed, pay-as-you-go pension program. Weighed down by unalleviable demographic burdens, it is in fact hard to imagine how these programs could remain viable.

The government-run Social Security and pension programs in virtually all of today's industrial democracies finance their operations by taxing today's workers to fund today's retirees. Since these systems were established in periods of relatively high fertility and relatively rapid population growth, pay-as-you-go pension systems had the political allure of promising generous benefits on the cheap. In an unguarded moment 30 years ago, Nobel Laureate Paul Samuelson captured the reasoning undergirding this approach to public finance:

> The beauty about social insurance is that it is actuarially unsound. Everyone who reaches retirement age is given benefit privileges that far exceed anything he has paid in.... Social Security is squarely based on what has been called the eighth wonder of the world—compound interest. A growing nation is the greatest Ponzi game ever contrived. And that is a fact, not a paradox.

With below-replacement fertility and increasing longevity, however, the arithmetic of pay-as-you-go retirement programs changes unforgivingly. As the ratio of employees to retirees falls, a universal pay-as-you-go retirement system has only three options for preventing bankruptcy: reduce pension benefits; raise taxes; restrict eligibility. There are no alternatives.

As Carolyn Weaver of the American Enterprise Institute persuasively demonstrated a decade ago, demographic forces had already brought social insurance programs throughout the Western world to the verge of crisis by the 1980s. By that time, Social Security payroll taxes alone exceeded 20 percent in a number of Western countries and exceeded 30 percent in at least one of them (Netherlands); unfunded liabilities nevertheless continued to mount. But when Weaver was writing, there were almost six persons of working age (as the years 15 to 64 are customarily designated) for every person of retirement age (65 and older) in the "more developed regions." With zero, and then negative, population growth, those ratios would fall precipitously.

The dimensions of that decline are reflected in projected "dependency ratios," for the number of persons 65 and older

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per 100 persons between the ages of 15 and 64. In 1995, under the current crisis of the Western welfare state, that dependency ratio comes out to roughly 20—meaning that there are now about five people of working age for every person of retirement age. In 2050, by these projections, the dependency ratio in today's Western democracies would be above 50: The ratio of people 15 to 64 to people 65 and over would be less than two to one. In some countries, these projected ratios for the year 2050 would be still higher: 60 for Germany; 64 for Japan; and an amazing 80 for Italy where there would be only 125 persons in the 15 to 64 group for every 100 senior citizens.

Although populations in the "less developed regions" would not, in these projections, be so very "grey," those countries would likely be less capable of maintaining state-based pay-as-you-go retirement systems in the year 2050 than OECD countries are today. For one thing, the dependency ratio of elderly to working-age population would be higher for the "less developed regions," on average, than it is in any OECD country today. For another, the "less developed regions" half a century hence may not, on average, be nearly as affluent as the OECD countries are today. The calculations of the economic historian Angus Maddison suggest that, even after adjusting for international differences in purchasing power of local currencies, per capita GDP for what the UN terms "less developed regions" was about one-fifth of the "more developed countries" per capita GDP in the early 1990s—and less than one-sixth of the OECD countries. If these regions should enjoy long-term per capita growth rates of 3 percent a year for the next half-century, their average output level would still be nearly 40 percent lower than OECD's today. (To get a sense of what this would mean, think of financing Western Europe's pension burden in the coming decade out of Western European incomes from the late 1960s.)

Already the actuarial status of state-run retirement systems in most OECD countries appears unsustainable. In the United States, according to calculations by economists at the OECD, the net present value of the unfunded deficit in our Social-Security system amounts to only 23 percent of GDP. I say "only" because the unweighted average of that deficit for the

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20 OECD countries examined came to 95 percent of GDP. Even were the implicit social contract underlying these systems gutted—by, for example, restricting pension eligibility to cover less than a third of the retirement-age population—over half of these pension systems would still remain underfunded for the foreseeable future.

These OECD calculations, of course, pertain to the net present value of government pension systems *today*—when people of working age outnumber the retirement-age groups by roughly five to one. In 2050—if the ratio of working-age to retirement populations were indeed two to one, or less—the net present value of the deficit in state pension systems as they are currently constituted would be vastly greater.

As an abstract conjecture, it is possible that societies under such circumstances could keep their pre-existing Social Security systems intact—if they were willing to foreswear publicly financing practically anything else and to sacrifice a good measure of future economic growth as well. But free electorates today would never opt willingly for such a choice, and it seems highly unlikely that they would do so tomorrow. Under the demographic constraints envisioned in the UN's "low variant" projections, the mounting pressures would likely generate political momentum for a transition to an actuarially viable pension system.

One aspect of such a restructuring would likely be later general retirement ages, as populations made greater productive use of their extended active life spans. No less significant, such a restructuring would almost necessarily presuppose a change from pay-as-you-go financing to self-financing of retirement benefits by individuals over the course of their own lives. Though such a change could involve a full privatization of social insurance, it is also possible to imagine the reformed pension systems operating under the aegis of government. Even under government supervision, however, it is hard to see how self-financed pensions (which explicitly acknowledge the beneficiary's creation of his or her retirement account) could lend themselves as readily to redistributive or other non-market objectives as pay-as-you-go arrangements have done. Declining population growth thus might not suppress the appetite of the state, but it might well check the voting public's willingness to feed it.

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From blood ties to elective affinities?

Nearly 40 years ago, Jean Fourastié, the French sociologist, wrote a vivid and penetrating essay on how family and social life changes under the influence of the modern decline in mortality. The revolution in survival chances, he asserted, had transformed marriage from a binding but temporary contract to a much lengthier, and possibly more tenuous, commitment; it had reduced old age from an almost mystical status to a common and often pitiable physical condition; and it had all but banished the procession of death and suffering that had previously conditioned all family life. Fourastié also noted that the modern revolution in mortality schedules had totally altered the ordinary person's chances of participating in "intellectual life" (which he took to begin at age 12) and "independent life" (which commenced, in his view, around age 20). The scope for "creative intellectual life," he observed, had been hugely expanded by improvements in survival chances: By his calculations, modern man could expect to experience between three and six times as many years of life in his forties and fifties (which Fourastié designated the peak period of creativity) as the "traditional man" of the seventeenth century. (This vast extension of "creative intellectual life," I would add, may have contributed to modern economic growth, which has been so strongly driven by applied advances in knowledge.)

If a revolution in mortality has already recast social rhythms and relations within the family, a revolution in fertility may have a similar impact in the future. More specifically, the magnitudes of the fertility declines envisioned in the UN's "low variant" projections would set the stage for a world never before inhabited: *a world in which the only biological relatives for many people—perhaps most people—will be their ancestors.*

Paradoxically, the great reduction in fertility witnessed in Western societies over the past two centuries has been accompanied by a parallel reduction in childlessness. In the modern world, as the demographer Laurent Toulemon has observed, "very few couples remain childless voluntarily." Under the modern regimen of sub-replacement fertility, it seems, very few parents seek a third child, but almost everyone chooses to have that first baby if they can.

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Under such circumstances, prolonged bouts of fertility far below the replacement level would profoundly alter the composition of the typical family. Consider the possibilities for Italy, currently the country with the world's lowest fertility level. At the moment, Italy's TFR is estimated to be less than 1.2; the UN's "low variant" projections anticipate the continuation of this pattern to the year 2050. If Italy's current fertility regimen is extended for two generations, the Italian family will be completely redefined. For, in that future world, under reasonable assumptions about the incidence of childlessness and larger families, almost three-fifths of the nation's children will have no siblings, cousins, aunts, or uncles; they will have only parents, grandparents, and perhaps great-grandparents. Under those same assumptions, less than 5 percent of Italy's children would have both siblings *and* cousins.

Italy's position today is at an extreme within the fertility continuum among contemporary nations. But projecting the fertility rates for the entire European Union forward two generations only slightly alters the Italian scenario: About 40 percent of those European children would have no collateral blood relatives; less than one-sixth would have a brother or a sister and a cousin. Families in the "less developed regions" in the year 2050 would not have moved so far in this direction. But they would in time: Within another generation or two, a family consisting of siblings, cousins, uncles, and aunts would be anomalous throughout the entire world.

While it is possible to describe this new typology of the family, it is almost impossible today to imagine what it would portend. Throughout the remembered human experience, the family has been the primary and indispensable instrument for socializing a people. In the family, the individual found extended bonds of obligation and reciprocal resources—including emotional resources—upon which he could draw. Under the demographic projections considered here, all that would change momentously. For many people, "family" would be understood as a unit that does not include any biological contemporaries or peers.

How will each person's little tribe be formed in such a future? Who will we play with, learn from, love unthinkingly, and fight with ferociously, knowing all the while that we can

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do these things because we are linked together by an indissoluble common tie? If "family," to paraphrase Robert Frost, "are the people who must take you when no one else will," and blood relatives one's own age are no longer the norm, who then will take us in?

The nuclear family may have marked a radical departure from previous sorts of family arrangements. But, as we have just seen, the nuclear family does not begin to approach the limits of social atomization that may await us in a depopulating world. Difficult as the implications of these changes may be to comprehend today, we may yet manage to assess them very carefully. For it is not impossible that we will eventually experience them firsthand.

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The crisis in scholarly publishing

WILLIAM C. DOWLING

UNTIL one day last February, I thought I had a pretty good understanding of what is now generally called "the crisis of the monograph"—that is, the drying up of resources for intensive studies of small but worthwhile subjects in favor of trend-driven publishing. Such publishing is favored today by some leading university presses, on subjects formerly associated with punk rock lyrics or supermarket tabloids or the Oprah Winfrey show. As an eighteenth-century scholar I had myself published several specialized literary studies, and as co-owner of Winthrop Press, a small part-time publishing operation based in Princeton, New Jersey, I had learned a good bit about the economics of book production. The one thing I hadn't done, as it happened, was actually lay eyes on any example of the new trend-based scholarship.

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Nor did I have any intention of doing so on that day in February. I had gone up to Micawber Books, our most dependable local purveyor of "serious" titles, in search of *Aulus Gellius*, a new study of the *Noctes Atticae* by the British classicist Leofranc Holford-Strevens. I knew it was a long shot. The book is published by the University of North Carolina Press. I had seen other UNC titles on their shelves, but even Micawber seldom carries anything as specialized as studies of minor second-century Latin authors. It wasn't there. I special ordered the book and, the weather being chilly and the afternoon gray, fell to browsing in Micawber's recently expanded section on Gender and Cultural Studies. This was my awakening. I stood there reading for an hour, by which time I saw that I would never understand the crisis in scholarly publishing until I had at least attempted to understand how this section of the bookstore had come into existence.

The book I took home from the cultural-studies section that day was *Barbie's Queer Accessories*, written by Erica Rand, a "dyke activist"—the phrase comes from the back cover—who teaches art history at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. It was published by Duke University Press. In the months since, I have read a great number of works in gender and cultural studies, but nothing I have read since better exemplifies the new trend-driven scholarly publishing than *Barbie's Queer Accessories*. To read it through is to see why, for better or for worse, the traditional scholarly monograph is on its way to extinction.

Barbie's queer accessories

To begin with, *Barbie's Queer Accessories* is written in the quasi-autobiographical mode that has become the trademark of so much writing in cultural studies. It is difficult to resist its note of personal engagement. Rand begins with the story of how her interest in Barbie dolls arose, almost by accident, from an otherwise wholly routine incident. A friend had sent her the latest copy of their favorite lesbian sex magazine, and while leafing through its pages, Rand came across a photograph of a woman inserting a Barbie doll—"feet first"—into her vagina. Here, Rand saw instantly, was something more

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significant than a mere bit of lesbian pornography. She loved the photograph, and she immediately wanted to teach it to her students in art history and women's studies.

Yet there was a danger. In a world still swayed by homophobic attitudes, a Barbie-in-the-vagina photo might be taken as an immature or sophomoric gesture of "transgression" rather than an occasion of serious intellectual analysis. "I worried," as she puts it, "about inserting a Barbie dildo into the heterosexist context of the university classroom." In this moment of pedagogical perplexity lie the origins of *Barbie's Queer Accessories* as a work of scholarship. For as Rand consults colleagues and friends about the problem, the question of the Barbie dildo drops into the background—she does eventually introduce the photo into classroom discussion, and nothing much happens—while Rand herself begins to get widely known as someone with an interest in Barbie dolls.

The ostensible subject of *Barbie's Queer Accessories* is what in cultural studies is called "counterhegemonic discourse"—"the Barbie features that," as Rand puts it early on, "make her seem to resist the free play of accessorizing signifiers"—but a reader soon understands that Rand's heart isn't in the talk about counterhegemony and accessorizing signifiers. The real subject is the book itself: how it came to be written, what Rand went through in writing it. Thus, for instance, Rand's account of how her early research as a Barbie scholar took the form, very often, of simply gathering anecdotes:

> My friends told me about how they had loved or hated Barbie and about what they had done with and to her—how they had turned her punk, set her on fire, made her fuck Midge or Ken or G.I. Joe, or, on occasion, gotten the much advertised "hours of fun" by following Mattel's directions. People I hardly knew who heard of my interest were anxious to tell me their Barbie tales.

The serious intellectual substance of *Barbie's Queer Accessories* always has to do with personal experience. Rand does undertake a dutiful review of Mattel's own "official" history of Barbie, but this is quite unabashedly journalistic filler, the sort of thing one might find in a magazine article about the toy industry. The moments at which the writing comes alive—the reason, one sees, that the editorial board at Duke must

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have been drawn to it in the first place—are those in which Rand talks about her own personal involvement with Barbie dolls. Consider her extended account of a dollhouse-like "environment," Barbie's Dream Loft, originally created for Rand by an artist friend. As restaged by Rand herself, the scene features two dolls, a blonde Barbie and a Chicana Barbie, in a "top/bottom dyke sex scene" in which the latter plays the dominant role: "She stands bent over blond Barbie with a hand on blond Barbie's butt, a hand moved now and then to suggest alternately spanking, anal penetration, and the more run-of-the-mill hand-to-vagina activity generically known as finger-fucking." The intellectual substance of the Dream Loft section lies in the way Rand is able to turn her own sense of inner conflict to the purposes of serious cultural analysis:

> Among other problems, I struggled with how to assign roles to my two Barbies. Putting Chicana Barbie on top reinforces racial stereotypes of the dark brute overpowering the less animalistic white girl; the hair contrast alone places my Dream Loft firmly within the hetero-generated tradition of lesbian representation, which often features an aggressive, dark-haired vixen seducing a blond innocent. Putting blond Barbie on top would have subverted these stereotypes but performed white supremacy. In terms of race there was no way out of the dominant discourse.

Journalistic clues

This is a standard sort of analysis in cultural studies. Allowing for some adjustment among "theoretical" registers, most of the books in the section in which I originally came across *Barbie's Queer Accessories* were written in this mode. Its significance lies, I think, no matter how one may happen to feel personally about Barbie studies or the paradoxes of lesbian representation, in the way it is today driving out of existence a more "traditional" sort of scholarly publication. For it is not simply that demand for specialized studies like *Aulus Gellius*, the volume I had come to buy, has all but disappeared—as I shall show, current statistics suggest that such studies will in a very short time cease to be published at all—nor that the demand for books like *Barbie's Queer Accessories* has, at least over the short term, mushroomed. It is that a hidden play of

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institutional and economic forces has conspired to put them in direct competition.

An essential point here—what I mean by talking about "hidden" forces—is that a decline in demand for books in the *Aulus Gellius* category and a rise in demand for *Barbie's Queer Accessories* need not be related. It is true that one has an intuitive sense that the two must be connected. Chevrolet sales go down and Toyota sales go up: Isn't this likely to be related to the zero-sum nature of competition in the automobile industry? The problem is that books, unlike automobiles, need not exist in precisely this zero-sum relation to one another. We could easily enough imagine, for instance, a situation in which demand for both Tai Kwon Do books and Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment* rose dramatically simply because, for whatever reason, people had begun to read more.

This is a point that seldom comes up in recent writing about the "crisis of the monograph," where, beyond occasional grumbling that only titles about gender or identity politics seem to sell these days, most of the talk has been about production costs, library budgets, warehouse-storage rates, and the like. So it is that we get the essential clue to the zero-sum relation between *Aulus Gellius* and *Barbie's Queer Accessories* in quite a different quarter: the journalistic celebration of Cultural Studies that has tended to pursue the story on the level of names and personalities. Examples of such treatment include a long *Lingua Franca* article on editor William Germano and the triumph of what its critics have called "tabloid scholarship" at Routledge, a piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on Nicholas Pfund of NYU Press, and, on a weekly basis, items in the *Chronicle*'s own recently instituted "Hot Type" department, devoted to the new and the topical in university publishing.

The reason that this journalism strikes me as crucial is that it has emanated from the same space—located, as one might say, somewhere between *People* magazine and the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*—occupied by Cultural Studies itself, such that one is constantly aware of tremors of an assumed "transgressiveness" just beneath the surface. For otherwise, on the face of it, these would simply be marketing stories, as readily told about General Foods as Routledge or

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NYU Press. Thus, for instance, we hear in *Lingua Franca* that Routledge once favored sober, academic-type covers for its books. No more:

> The cover of *Spectacular Bodies*, a study of gender and race in action movies, is typical of Routledge's hunk, puff-'n'-pant aesthetic. It features a muscle-bound and tattooed Jean-Claude Van Damme. *Arresting Images*, a collection on art and censorship, juxtaposes an image of the artist Leon Golub dressed as a cardinal with a bound torture victim, her nude chest dripping with blood.

Or, from the Routledge in-house organ *The Cultural Studies Times*, we get a list of the "top-ten reasons why you need a cultural studies section in your bookstore" ("#6—To create a hip pick-up scene," "#8—Where else would you find Barbie, Disney, and Madonna next to one another?").

Intellectual prostitutes

The tendency in these stories is to focus on two elements, the personality of the protagonist—portrayed as a brash young ex-academic or would-be academic who has dared to overturn the stodgy orthodoxies of conventional scholarly publishing—and the "sensationalistic" quality of the titles they have dared to publish. Thus the picture of Germano, the central figure in *Lingua Franca*'s Routledge story, moving through the corridors at the Modern Language Association:

> Germano's devotion to the culture of academic celebrity remains strong. "When I go to MLA," he says, "I don't go to hear papers. I go to ask people whom I respect who's hot, what's going on, what are you *really* excited about? That's much more important than spending two hours listening to a lecture." And, apparently, what people are really excited about is Tonya Harding: Routledge's most-hyped forthcoming title is *Women on Ice: Feminist Responses to the Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan Spectacle*.

The emphasis, in short, is on what is being published and how it is being packaged: Tonya Harding, Jean-Claude Van Damme, nude torture victims dripping with blood, Barbie as dildo. The same note occurs in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*'s account of Nicholas Pfund, the new director of NYU Press. ("Fast-moving and aggressive," reports the *Chronicle*

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somewhat breathlessly, "Mr. Pfund may represent the future of scholarly editing.") There is the usual story of a marketing miracle wrought by paying attention to trends—NYU, we learn, "has doubled sales in the past four years, to more than $3.2 million annually. And with Mr. Pfund at the helm, it has an all-important buzz going for it"—and then the list of titles that have brought in the profits: "What do people want to read, according to Mr. Pfund? *Drag: A History of Female Impersonation in the Performing Arts*, *Clarence Thomas and the Tough Love Crowd*, *Lesbian Erotics*, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, and *Heavenly Sex*, 'a lighthearted tour of sexuality in the Jewish tradition,' by Ruth Westheimer (who is an adjunct faculty member at N.Y.U.) and Jonathan Mark."

Yet it would be a serious mistake, I think, to suppose that the subjects or topics or titles of these books play anything but a minor role in such stories of marketing success. For there is, first of all, the simple fact that the culture on which they report is immensely more "sensationalistic" than anything that could be found on the Cultural Studies bookshelves. Tonya Harding and female impersonation are not, after all, news to the millions who view TV "trash" talk shows, and who, if they should happen to want more information, would be far more likely to turn to *People* magazine or a supermarket tabloid than a title published by Routledge or NYU or Duke University Press.

Then there is the fact that large commercial publishers, with far greater resources and even fewer misgivings about being accused of intellectual prostitution, have taken aim at the same market. It is its despairing sense that the very notion of intellectual prostitution has ceased to have meaning among American publishers, for instance, that drives the *New Republic* to an almost desperate irony in reporting on a new children's series to be put out by Random House:

> Last week Maureen O'Brien of *The New York Post* reported that Random House is planning a series of fast tabloid books about sensational crimes ... for children. A spokeswoman for the publishing house told O'Brien that these books will be "exposés of the most provocative, frightening, other worldly and until now 'adult' current events." We're not sure what "other worldly" means,

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but the meaning of "until now 'adult'" is perfectly clear. Random House is preparing to pander to kids. The same spokeswoman admitted that "if another Jeffrey Dahmer and Amy Fisher were to come along and make the news, that's precisely the type of crimes that we would want to cover in these books." (See Amy fire. See Jeffrey chew.)... The first volume is called *Unabomber: Handled with Care*. Another shrewd publicity person at Random House did us the favor of sending along the book's first three chapters. They are special. Chapter One tells of a botched explosion on a Boeing 727 carrying seventy-two people:... "The bomber went to a lot more trouble than he had to. He *could* have bought a lot of the stuff at Radio Shack." (*Cool.*)... And so on. We wish the publishers luck in hell.

The *Belle du Jour* scenario

Were they simply entries in the Jeffrey Dahmer-Amy Fisher market, there is no reason to suppose that books like *Women on Ice* and *Barbie's Queer Accessories* would be selling any more copies than the average scholarly monograph. There is simply too much competition, both in the media generally and within publishing from commercial firms like Random House, to explain their success as being due to an attentiveness to market trends to which traditional scholarly publishers have remained oblivious. This is what directs us to look for an explanation in a source of "transgression" having very little to do with Barbie dildos or nude torture victims and a great deal to do with a titillation presumed to arise from seeing authors trained in serious scholarship displaying an absorption in such topics.

To see the marketing success of publishers like Routledge and NYU as a narrative or story, in other words, is to see that its underlying plot has all along been a version of *Belle du Jour*, Bunuel's film about an upper-class woman who has a secret life working in a Parisian brothel. The thrill lies not in the scenes that take place in the brothel—one has always known, after all, that houses of prostitution exist—but in all the scenes that don't: the prim society lady at home in her proper surroundings, the servants and the rich furnishings and the ceremony of afternoon tea. The hovering sense of a "violated" propriety *is* the story, in a manner of speaking. Take it away, and *Belle du Jour* is simply about a prostitute going to

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work. The recent success of various Cultural Studies titles seems to me explicable on similar terms.

Yet there is a twist. The *Belle du Jour* scenario would seem to make sense, on the face of it, only if there were some market of general readers thrilled to discover that university-trained scholars—minds presumed to be at home with Plato and Kant and Shakespeare, popularly supposed to be the custodians of some "higher" learning—have, once one has penetrated the veil of intellectual hypocrisy, exactly the same preoccupations as the average viewer of "Roseanne" or "Oprah." The problem is, of course, that no such market exists. For it is academics themselves, by and large, who provide the market for these titles. No one who actually buys *Barbie's Queer Accessories* is shocked by its "transgressive" patter about finger-fucking, and no one who might be so shocked buys books like *Barbie's Queer Accessories*.

The zero-sum relationship between books like *Barbie's Queer Accessories* and books like *Aulus Gellius* thus demands to be understood as, after all, something entirely internal to academic publishing, involving a kind of allegory or fantasy in which a specific academic audience is encouraged to imagine, to its considerable delight, a stuffy "establishment" driven to apoplexy by the very idea of Barbie or Madonna studies. Most Cultural Studies titles are something like those special-effects movies in which a cartoon-character protagonist is introduced into an actual setting: *Barbie's Queer Accessories* "transgresses" only so long as its readers may imagine its being actually presented as a credential for tenure or promotion at a real college or university. For the same reason, it is important that the contributors to *Women on Ice* be "feminists," which, translated, may mean "academic feminists," which in turn means university-trained scholars who may be presumed to be "transgressing" in writing about "tabloid" subjects like Tonya Harding.

Tenuring Barbie

Perhaps the greatest significance of the Cultural Studies trend lies in the way it has put a power of evaluation and oversight, traditionally invested in the community of scholars themselves, into the hands of figures like Germano and Pfund. Twenty years ago, it was much harder to get a specialized

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literary study accepted at, say, Princeton, than at what was then generally called a second- or third-tier press, such that acceptance at Princeton University Press meant certain academic or intellectual recognition for a scholarly author. In a recent thoughtful article on scholarly publishing, literary critic Hugh Kenner describes a former press committee colleague going through a sardonic pantomime: "'We control,' Ralph Rader would say, 'The Imprint', ... he'd emphasize the formality of The Imprint by a downward punch with an invisible Great Seal." For the process of scholarly refereeing within a recognized order of selectivity was until very recently able to operate, however imperfectly, as something like a minimal guarantee of intellectual quality.

This is no longer true. For whatever reason, the refereeing process has been more seriously compromised by current trends than anything else in scholarly publishing, to the point that even leading university presses tend now to think primarily in market terms when considering manuscripts for publication. This is why, for instance, there has been a kind of stampede in recent years at "top" presses to add editors in such areas as gender and cultural studies, and why old-line editors, whose expertise lay in the immensely complex business of getting submitted work reliably evaluated on purely intellectual grounds, have gradually been pushed to the margins or phased out. The model that now dominates, in short, is that of someone like Germano at Routledge:

> An editor can walk into my office and say: "I've been talking to some smart people in this field and they are excited about topic X.... I think we should commission a collection." We'll consult our marketing department, and if they think it's a good project being done by the right people and they can sell it, we'll send out a contract. When the book comes in, then we might get a reader's report to see whether it is correct in all its details.

This is where the demoralization among university publishers has resulted most significantly in damage to the tenure and promotion process. At nearly every major university, books accepted by publishers like Routledge under the conditions described by Germano are today being considered by departments, tenure and promotion committees, and deans and provosts on the terms once reserved for works of genuine schol-

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arship. And, as more university publishers imitate the model, making it harder to tell the difference between a book published by Routledge and one published by NYU or Rutgers or Duke University Press, the problem becomes more severe. We have entered a period, in short, where young academics may quite realistically expect tenure and promotion for having written *Barbie's Queer Accessories* or contributed to *Women on Ice*, while authors of specialized studies like *Aulus Gellius* may just as realistically expect never to be published at all.

The real death knell of the learned monograph is not to be heard, it seems to me, in any dreary recitation of declining sales figures and shrinking library budgets. It is, rather, the sound of Pfund cheerily spelling out to a reporter from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* his own predilections in publishing:

> I'm just not interested on an intellectual level in figuring out how to publish tremendously esoteric texts. What I want are books that people read, that deal with subjects that are of interest to a range of people. That entails a willingness occasionally to say it's not our responsibility to publish a book, no matter how good, if it's going to lose a lot of money.

Demoralization

But how is the crisis of the monograph being perceived within the world of academic or university publishing? Consider part of a letter from John G. Ryden, the director of Yale Press, to Hugh Kenner:

> Yale and every other university press in America has seen the sale of the scholarly monograph ... decline by two-thirds. Where we once expected to sell perhaps 2,500, we now sell 800-900. Over the years smaller print runs pushed up costs and therefore prices in an ongoing spiral. Scholars virtually stopped buying books. Library budgets declined in the 70s; in the 80s they dropped again and serial purchases cut deeply into funds available to buy books.

Or, consider "The Crisis in Scholarly Communication," written for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* by Sanford G. Thatcher, director of Penn State Press. In the last 10 years, Thatcher reports, Penn State Press has published 150 titles in

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literary studies, putting it among the leading scholarly publishers in that field. "We cannot be sure exactly how many people have read these books, but we do know how many have bought them. Of the 150 titles, 65 percent have sold fewer than 500 copies and 91 percent fewer than 800. Only 3 percent (generally those dealing with American literature or gender issues) have sold more than 1,000 copies." The result has been a draconian change in policy: "The market for books of traditional literary criticism has now shrunk to the point that it is no longer possible for a small, unendowed press like Penn State's to continue publishing such works."

Thatcher's column in the *Chronicle* conveys the current sense of demoralization among traditional scholarly publishers and the particularly close connection between scholarly publishing and tenure and promotion in American colleges and universities. Much of Thatcher's column is based on a survey taken by Penn State Press among authors on its own list, and the results in this department are especially dispiriting:

> According to the survey of our authors, the deciding factor when they do buy a book is "the reputation of the author." This suggests that the careers of younger scholars publishing their first books are especially at risk. If faculty members are required to publish books to gain tenure, how will they manage to do so if presses can no longer afford to issue books by unknown authors that are likely to sell only a few hundred copies?

When university presses like his own have to cease publishing specialized studies, says Thatcher, something is badly amiss in the scholarly world, "which relies on such publications to make the process of tenure and promotion work."

But what are those specialized studies that Penn State Press is no longer able to publish? Thatcher's mention of "gender issues" as one of the only two categories in which Penn State titles have sold 1,000 copies is enough to let us guess that we are dealing here with the zero-sum relationship discussed earlier. Most books that attain even this modest level of marketing success will be those that, like *Barbie's Queer Accessories*, manage to attract a somewhat wider audience by promising to transgress the norms of conventional or traditional scholarship. In the background, then, gathering dust on the shelves of unsold volumes, will be all those books—97 percent, in the

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Penn State case—that, like *Aulus Gellius*, embody precisely the "higher" learning whose very conventionality gives the transgression its point: Studies assuming a certain background in ancient and modern history, philosophy, literature, and languages, and very often presuming beyond that a genuine interest in some writer or intellectual milieu that, from what might be called the Barbie's Dream Loft perspective, must seem hopelessly and hilariously obscure.

Ancient culture

One could not look for a better example than *Aulus Gellius*, the subject of Holford-Strevens's study. For the author of the *Noctes Atticae* wrote long after the great age of Livy and Horace and Virgil, and, even among scholars who take a serious interest in authors of the Antonine period, he has not been seen as a commanding figure. The *Noctes Atticae* is itself a collection of occasional pieces, composed, as Gellius tells us, during the winter evenings when he was staying in a villa with a friend outside Athens. The work consists of anecdotes and chatty observations, remarks on books and Greek and Latin grammar and curious points of natural history, little glimpses of Graeco-Roman life as it settled gratefully into a long calm after the terror and insanity of Caligula and Nero and Domitian, the incest and murder and capricious tyranny of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian years as one reads about them in Tacitus or Suetonius.

To anyone drawn to the *Noctes Atticae*, a great part of the attraction has always no doubt lain in the way they permit a modern reader to bask, as Holford-Strevens says, in the afternoon sun of ancient culture, to dwell with Aulus Gellius and his friends in a Roman intellectual milieu that was beginning to turn backwards to its own earliest roots and, beyond that, to the enormous debt to Greek literature, philosophy, and political theory on which so much of the Roman civic and literary achievement was based. Modern scholarship has done a great deal to recover the details that make this picture so compelling—the large-scale absorption of provincials into Roman administration, so that the empire becomes gradually and peacefully a homogenous entity; the completion and perfection of the road system that allowed one to travel easily from

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one end to another of its vast extent; the hundreds of cities of the empire that became "little Romes," with their amphitheaters and their baths and libraries—but it is only in works like the *Noctes Atticae* that we are permitted to hear the voices of the age.

Yet those voices are conversing in Latin and Greek, which is no doubt why books like *Aulus Gellius*, even given the great attractions of what one scholar calls the Antonine golden age, could hardly be expected to sell a thousand copies in the 1990s. In practical terms, this means that Holford-Strevens must assume on the part of his readers at least enough Greek and Latin to make sense of the world—to a very large extent, a world of books, of phrases echoing earlier poetry and drama and philosophy—that it is his business to recreate. So, for instance, we have the scene in which Gellius, who has just made the sea passage from Greece to Brundisium, comes ashore and takes a stroll around the marketplace to regain his land-legs. He comes across a bookstall in which a great number of old Greek books are for sale. They are in battered condition, but they are cheap. He buys the lot, and then spends the next two nights reading them, copying into his commonplace book their tales about strange people in faraway places, cannibals, and one-eyed humans—we are in the immediate vicinity here of Othello's "Anthropophagai, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders"—and tribes who are able to kill by uttering praise.

Some of these same stories, says Gellius, he later found in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*. The point made by Holford-Strevens will be precisely that a great deal of this has demonstrably come directly from Pliny, that the story of the sea voyage and the stroll around the marketplace has been imported into this context to bestow verisimilitude on a borrowed template onto which Gellius will then overlay other curious bits of Greek anthropological learning. The argument depends, inevitably, on a close analysis of the language used by both Gellius and Pliny:

> That the order is the same is an argument for dependence, supported by linguistic similarities. At *NH* 7.16, *NA* 9.4. 7-8, and nowhere else till Symmachus, *Ep.* 6.77, we find the verb *effascinare*: Pliny writes "in eadem Africa familias quasdam effascinantium,"

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> Gellius "quasdam in terra Africa hominum familias uoce atque lingua effascinantium"; to Pliny's "effascinent interemantque" correspond in Gellius "exitialem fascinationem" and "interimant."... Pliny is therefore a source, but not the only source: whereas at §25 he states that the Astomi are clad in leaves, "uestiri frondium lanugine," Gellius (§10) gives them feathers like the birds', "auium ritu plumantibus." An original πτεριον, it seems, has been diversely understood as "fern" and "little feather."

The decline of civilization

As a work of scholarship, Holford-Strevens's *Aulus Gellius* is a superb exploration of this literary and cultural moment. It is also, significantly enough for the present discussion, a perfect example of the sort of work that can no longer be published, or even considered for publication, by Penn State Press under the policy reported by Sanford Thatcher. But, in the current climate, *Aulus Gellius* has become one of those "tremendously esoteric texts" in which Pfund professes so complete a lack of interest in comparison to the titles that do appeal to him and the readers sought by NYU Press.

No one who has studied the present situation can doubt that Penn State Press is, in its decision to give up publishing studies like *Aulus Gellius*, simply a bit ahead of the times. For the same bleak story is being played out at every university press for which statistics are available, and it cannot be long before Thatcher's decision begins to be repeated by directors of other presses. Yet there is a problem here. *Aulus Gellius*, however small its present readership, is a genuine contribution to knowledge. It will be there on the shelves of a few great libraries a hundred years from now, read and studied by scholars who retain a serious interest in the culture of late antiquity, long after the last copy of *Barbie's Queer Accessories* has been pulped and the names of Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan and Midge and Ken and G.I. Joe have vanished into oblivion. And, in a situation in which works like *Aulus Gellius* are no longer published, it seems to me, we may with some justice cease to speak about a "crisis of the monograph" and begin speaking of a crisis in the sphere of human knowledge.

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Fathers and welfare reform

WADE F. HORN & ANDREW BUSH

AMERICA is embarking upon a dramatic new course in the way it provides assistance to our nation's poorest families and their children. Recently enacted federal welfare reforms have altered both the purpose and the form of the nation's principal cash-assistance program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Retitled Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the program is no longer to serve as a long-term replacement for parents' earnings. Rather, aid is now to be used to promote long-term self-sufficiency. The new law also gives states the responsibility for determining virtually all the standards and requirements for their TANF programs. Although in most states dramatic changes have not yet happened, the opportunity for revolutionary reform has never been greater.

To date, reforms have focused almost exclusively upon welfare-to-work strategies. But if America is to succeed at this grand new experiment, only part of what needs to be done involves promoting work among welfare recipients. Despite

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being viewed primarily as a poverty issue, welfare really stands at the center of a broader social conflagration even more profound than the vital issue of economic self-reliance: the demise of marriage and the increasing disappearance of fathers from families. Our children do need working parents, but they need their fathers even more.

Rather than simply helping single-parent households figure out a way to generate earnings in the absence of a father, state reforms must find ways to bring more fathers back into (or into for the first time) the lives of their children. In this article, we lay out strategies for how states can make fatherhood and marriage explicit and integral parts of welfare reform.

Don't forget fatherhood

Families are the primary institutions through which we protect and nurture our children, and upon which free societies depend for establishing social order and promoting individual liberty and fulfillment. However, over the past several decades the United States has been experiencing a dramatic decline in the institution of marriage and family. Children are increasingly raised outside of two-parent families. More precisely, there has been a decline of fatherhood, for when marriages fail, or when children are born out of wedlock and a two-parent family never forms, it is almost always fathers who are absent. The absence of fathers has, in turn, severely increased the life risks faced by their children.

As state officials launch new welfare reforms, they must not lose sight of the larger issues of fatherhood and marriage. At the least, this requires addressing the ability of fathers to financially support their children. But fathers are important to the well-being of children for far greater reasons than merely the economic. Their involvement as nurturers, disciplinarians, teachers, coaches, and moral instructors is also critically important to the healthy development and maturation of children.

Given the importance of the father's role, welfare reform must advance policies that make marriages more secure and out-of-wedlock childbearing and single parenting less frequent. This is not to say that all fathers are good for their children and that all marriages should be saved. Separations, and even

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divorce, are sometimes necessary. But despite this, the widespread trend toward fatherlessness must be reversed, and welfare reform is an important place to start reversing it.

The problem is that strategies for promoting fatherhood and marriage are, to a very large extent, in conflict with those that seek to help single mothers achieve self-sufficiency through work. Indeed, a welfare system that helps single mothers become employed, but ignores the need to promote fatherhood and marriage, may only lead to more single parenting by mothers. Yet, despite increasing public concern about the problems of illegitimacy and fatherlessness, most welfare-reform efforts currently focus almost exclusively on moving unwed mothers into the paid labor force.

In part, the reason for the current focus on welfare-to-work strategies is that we know much more about promoting work than we do about making families form or keeping them together. But marriage is also something about which Americans today are considerably ambivalent. Because fatherhood and marriage frequently touch upon difficult, painful, and highly personal decisions for many Americans, we as a nation have been reluctant to address such matters through public-policy reforms. There is also the awful specter of domestic violence which leads some to believe that marriage is a "trap" for women. As a consequence, attempts at welfare reform have rarely involved explicit policies to promote marriage. Instead, most efforts at welfare reform have proceeded with what many proponents concede is ultimately a secondary, but at least attainable, strategy: improving the way we help single-parents confront their struggle for self-sufficiency.

This apparent conflict can be resolved by understanding that efforts to increase workforce attachment, increase marriage rates, decrease out-of-wedlock childbearing, and increase father involvement are not goals in and of themselves but, rather, means for achieving welfare's historic and, we believe, most important goal—improving the well-being of children. Each of these strategies is vitally important if we are to fundamentally reform a system that has trapped too many families and children in long-term dependency.

Of course, welfare reform cannot, by itself, solve the problems of fatherlessness and divorce any more than it alone will

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ever, by itself, solve the problem of poverty. So much depends upon both individual choices and broad societal and cultural influences. Yet, welfare policy can have a substantial impact on the decisions many people make and how they think about life choices.

A reconstruction of public aid

All available evidence suggests that the most effective pathway to involved, committed, and responsible fatherhood is marriage. Research has consistently found that unmarried fathers, whether through divorce or out-of-wedlock fathering, tend over time to become disconnected, both financially and psychologically, from their children. About 40 percent of children in father-absent homes have not seen their father in at least a year. Of the remaining 60 percent, only one in five sleeps even one night per month in the father's home.

Unwed fathers are particularly unlikely to stay connected to their children over time. Whereas 57 percent of unwed fathers visit their child at least once per week during the first two years of their child's life, by the time their child reaches seven and one-half years of age, visits by the father drop to less than 25 percent. Approximately 75 percent of men who are not living with their children at the time of their birth never subsequently live with them. Even when unwed fathers are cohabitating with the mother at the time of their children's birth, they are very unlikely to stay involved in their lives over the long term. Although a quarter of nonmarital births are to cohabitating couples, six out of 10 cohabitating couples never go on to marry, and those that do are more likely eventually to divorce than those couples who bear children within the marriage bond. Remarriage—or, in cases of an unwed father, marriage to someone other than the child's mother—makes it especially unlikely that a non-custodial father will remain in contact with his children.

The inescapable conclusion is this: If we want to increase the proportion of children growing up with involved and committed fathers, we will have to increase the number of children living with their married fathers. Unmarried men, and especially unwed fathers, are simply unlikely to stay in contact with their children over the long term.

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Of course, all marriages are not ideal. Domestic violence and irreconcilable differences will, at times, necessitate single-parent families. It is not, therefore, our view that either the ideal divorce rate or the ideal out-of-wedlock birth ratio ought to be zero. But neither should the divorce rate be 50 percent or the out-of-wedlock birth ratio be nearly 33 percent; both should be much closer to zero than they currently are, particularly given the connection between welfare dependency and the absence of a father in the home.

Thus, while acknowledging the inevitability of divorce and even out-of-wedlock childbearing in some circumstances, states must pursue a pro-marriage welfare-reform strategy. As pointed out by no less a liberal family advocate than Hillary Clinton, society requires a critical mass of married, two-parent families, both to raise their own children well and to serve as models for those who are being reared outside of the "conventional" family. The great tragedy today is that there are communities—especially low-income communities—where we have already lost that critical mass. Welfare must be transformed from a system that systematically discriminates against fathers and marriage to one that promotes responsible fatherhood and marriage. The question is how.

We recommend that states pursue five general strategies, all of which should be built into a comprehensive reconstruction of public aid which aims to strengthen two-parent families and to make single parenting less frequent. At the new system's core, assistance should establish a clear preference for marriage; it should help both current and potential fathers succeed at work so that they are more able and likely to commit themselves to marriage and responsible fatherhood; and it should establish clear disincentives for men who father children out of wedlock. Beyond this, though, states should also promote adoption when children are born out of wedlock and greater father involvement when adoption is rejected.

I: Privileging marriage

Various welfare rules have, over the years, functioned to discourage marriage and even father involvement in the lives of children. In particular, AFDC generally has had a variety of eligibility rules that are more restrictive for two-parent, as

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compared to single-parent, households, creating disincentives for marriage. States can begin to make welfare more father and marriage friendly by eliminating systemic preferences that give advantages to single-parent families over two-parent, married families.

But simply making welfare neutral when it comes to marriage is insufficient. Rather, to reinstate marriage as an ideal in low-income communities, states will need to construct explicit preferences for marriage. Of course, certain benefits must remain universally available, especially nutrition, immunization, and health-care programs. "Limited-supply" welfare benefits, on the other hand, can be distributed in support of two-parent, married households.

Examples of limited-supply benefits include enrollment slots in Head Start, public-housing units, financial aid for education expenditures, and job training. In the case of limited-supply benefits, a rule must be used to determine who actually receives the benefit. Heretofore, the rule has been either "first come, first serve" or "the most in need," which often translates into single-parent households. If we are serious about encouraging marriage, and by extension fatherhood, we should make these limited-supply benefits available *first* to married, two-parent families.

Some will argue that this is unfair, that single-parent households are, in fact, the most in need. But this argument ignores the fact that, until the late 1960s, welfare benefits frequently did privilege marriage—many public-housing projects, for example, gave preference to low-income married couples over single heads of households. And the disappearance of marriage in low-income neighborhoods corresponds with the dismantling of this preference for the married poor. Thus, if we want to revitalize marriage in low-income neighborhoods, we will have to alter the current preference for single-parent households in favor of married couples.

We do not believe that by privileging marriage in welfare policy, every potentially welfare-eligible couple will consider the size of their welfare benefit in the "heat of passion"—although this might happen more often than many think. What we do believe is that public policy, including welfare policy, can increase the degree to which our culture respects and

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values marriage. Government programs do not fix (or foul) every problem they touch, but policy surely has its influence upon how citizens view the decisions they make. Whether intentionally or not, welfare policies convey messages about what society thinks is right and wrong and about the moral responsibilities society expects its citizens to fulfill. This is not to say that we should be intolerant or fail to come to the aid of those who do not or cannot meet those standards. But welfare policy should convey an unambiguous message about what is important to the well-being of children. One very important ingredient for the well-being of children is growing up in a stable, two-parent household. Most often, this will require that parents be married.

II: Enhancing men's marriageability

Increasing the workforce attachment of parents on welfare is an important part of an overall welfare strategy. Work, even at low-wage levels, increases the amount of earned income available to their families relative to welfare and sets an example of work for children. Successful workforce attachment also requires parents to assume and maintain a serious responsibility, and, as they begin to exercise the responsibility of supporting themselves, they are more likely to exercise a greater commitment to their children.

However, increasing the workforce attachment of single mothers also has a downside. There is evidence that women, and especially women living in low-income communities, are reluctant to marry males whom they consider to have lower economic prospects than themselves. Hence, by increasing the earnings of single mothers, especially in communities with high rates of male unemployment, one may be inadvertently decreasing the probability of their marrying.

Of course, few would argue that the answer is to decrease the economic prospects of single women. But, at the same time, one must take into account the reality that women do not like to "marry down." Thus, in order to reinstitute marriage in low-income, welfare-dependent communities, states will need to take several steps.

First, states should expand participation in welfare-to-work employment programs to include the broader population of

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low-income males—not only as a means to increase their own life prospects but also as a means to increase their marriage prospects. In doing so, states should not finance training that is not well-connected to employment. Rather, states should use money formerly spent on benefits, education, and training to finance services that help low-income males get jobs and remain employed—including, when feasible, employment subsidies and community-service jobs for those who truly cannot find unsubsidized work.

An example of this is Wisconsin's recently enacted plan to end AFDC. The Wisconsin Works (W-2) program ends unconditional benefit payments and, instead, offers employment opportunities to able-bodied low-income parents. Eligibility is based upon income and resources, with no special benefit given to single parents. Public assistance under W-2 is intended to be *family* assistance, oriented to include fathers as much as possible and to help stabilize families.

Second, in expanding welfare-to-work employment programs to low-income males, states should distinguish between married fathers and unwed fathers. Providing employment opportunities primarily to low-income, unwed fathers could encourage men to father children out of wedlock, in much the same way that the current system provides perverse incentives for women to bear children out of wedlock. The cultural and public-policy message must be: We stand ready to assist low-income males who play by the rules and wait to have children until after they are married.

III: Sanctioning men who have children out of wedlock

The two most frequent pathways to welfare are divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing. Although the immediate result is the same (the formation of a single-parent family), the sequelae of divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing are quite different. First, divorced mothers are far more likely to receive formal child-support payments from the fathers than is the case for never-married mothers. Second, divorced mothers spend substantially less time on welfare than never-married mothers, primarily because they are more likely to remarry than women who bear children out of wedlock. Unfortunately, the percentage of AFDC-recipient children of non-married

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parents has risen steadily (from 27.9 percent in 1969, to 44.3 percent in 1983, to 55.7 percent in 1994), while the percentage of AFDC-recipient children of divorced parents has been steadily declining (from 43.3 percent in 1969, to 38.5 percent in 1979, to only 26.5 percent in 1994).

The most effective strategy for fighting long-term welfare dependency is to reduce the number of births to never-married women. While divorce certainly can have terrible consequences for children, reducing illegitimacy is far more important when it comes to reducing long-term welfare dependency. To date, most sanctions for out-of-wedlock childbearing have focused on single mothers. But to maximize the effectiveness of such efforts, states should also take steps to increase the opportunity costs for men who father children out of wedlock.

First, through the use of public education campaigns and the "bully pulpit," states should take a principled stand against the fathering of children out of wedlock. Second, states should vigorously enforce the child-support obligations of unwed fathers as a disincentive for fathering children out of wedlock. Third, states should restrict the ability of male teenagers who father a child out of wedlock to participate in extracurricular activities (especially sports). Fourth, given the fact that two-thirds of all births to unwed, teenage mothers are fathered by men 20 years of age or older, states should more aggressively enforce statutory rape laws.

IV: Promoting adoption

On most measures, children growing up in two-parent, adoptive families do as well as children growing up in two-parent, biological families, and significantly better than children growing up in single-parent or stepparent families. This needs to be reinforced: Adopted children are better off than children raised in single-parent households. Furthermore, opinion surveys consistently find that the general public supports adoption as a more attractive option in the case of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy than either abortion or single parenting. Yet, only 3 percent of white women and 1 percent of African-American women who conceive a child out of wedlock choose adoption.

One reason that adoption is chosen so infrequently today is that adoption is far too often seen as a failure of the "sys-

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tem"—a last resort that should be chosen only when all other options have been exhausted. But, if improving the well-being of children is the goal, states ought to operate under the principle that adoption is the first and best option, rather than the last, when confronted with an out-of-wedlock birth.

Effective adoption promotion will require a number of state actions, including retraining caseworkers to ensure they present adoption as a loving alternative to single parenting; aggressively publicizing the advantages of adoption; using welfare block-grant funds to increase the number of maternity homes available to unwed mothers who choose adoption; and speeding the adoption of abandoned infants and chronically abused children.

V: Making fathers responsible

In cases where adoption is rejected, the goal ought to be to ensure that the children have the benefit of growing up with the love and commitment of both their mother and their father. To date, most states have concentrated their efforts toward unwed fathers on the establishment of paternity and the enforcement of child-support obligations. But, if the goal is for every child to have an engaged, responsible, and committed father, states should take steps to encourage more involved fathering.

First, states should alter priorities within the child-support-enforcement programs to promote not only financial responsibility but also father involvement. One of the most effective programs for getting unwed fathers to establish paternity and to support their children economically is that run by the National Center for Responsible Fathering and Child Development in Cleveland, Ohio. The strength of this program is that it enhances father-child ties first, and paternity establishment and child support second. Experience from this program suggests that, as the father increases his attachment to the child, his desire to claim the child as his own and care for him also increases, including an increased desire to provide economic support.

Second, states should require custodial mothers to cooperate with visitation enforcement as a condition of welfare receipt. For far too long, the child-support-enforcement system

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has viewed children as being "owned" by the mother, with involvement of the father largely dependent upon the mother's good will. By making welfare benefits dependent on cooperation with visitation rights, states can encourage the view that this is not "her" child, but "their" child.

Third, states should pass on all child-support payments directly to the custodial parent, with none assigned to the state. Under AFDC rules, only the first $50 of any monthly child-support payment went directly to the mother; the rest went to the state to reimburse it for the costs of AFDC. When such a small amount of child support goes directly to the mother, there is an incentive for the mother to keep the identity of the father secret if the father is providing more than $50 a month in financial support under the table. Under TANF, states now have the authority to change these rules and allow all or most of the child-support payments to be paid directly to the custodial parents.

Experience in Wisconsin suggests that welfare recipients who are made aware of how much child support may be available to them, and who understand it will not be taken away if they work, are more inclined to find their way off welfare. In particular, when all child support was passed through in a demonstration project in Fond du Lac county, recipients began to see that much of the support they were receiving did not depend upon their being on welfare and that, by increasing their earnings, they could leave welfare altogether. Program administrators believe this led many recipients to increase their work effort so they could escape welfare dependency.

Finally, states should allow, or even require, unwed fathers to satisfy the welfare-reform work requirement while mothers care for the children as an alternative to child-support enforcement. A father who owes child support, but is unable to pay, could be offered the opportunity to work in a community-service position, or helped to find a job, as an alternative to jail. This is already being done in a number of states. This would have the advantage of increasing the earnings of the fathers, with which they can help support their child financially, while also fostering a sense of interdependence between the mother and the father.

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Promise keepers

There exists today no greater single threat to the long-term well-being of children, our communities, or our nation, than the increasing number of children being raised without a committed, responsible, and loving father. This problem will not be easily cured, and certainly not by changes in public policy alone. But welfare policy can have a significant effect upon how potential parents view marriage and their responsibilities. Welfare policy in recent decades has systematically subsidized single parenthood, serving to discourage many fathers from meeting their responsibilities. Yet the new federal welfare law has given states the opportunity to make considerable changes to their systems of public aid.

Success will depend on the clarity of our collective vision. If we focus too exclusively on measures that move single mothers into the paid labor force, we will have missed the most important purpose of any legitimate welfare system—to enhance the well-being of children. Simply put: Children need their fathers, and men need marriage to be good fathers. Effective welfare reform means encouraging more work, better fathering, and more marriages.

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The failure of drug education

D. M. GORMAN

THE role of the federal government in preventing adolescent drug use was a central issue of the 1996 presidential campaign. Bob Dole criticized the Clinton administration for slashing the staff of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) while Clinton criticized attempts by the Republican majority in Congress to cut federal support of drug-prevention programs—the most dramatic being a proposal to rescind the entire $482 million prevention budget of the Department of Education. It seemed as though everyone, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, wanted to be seen as favoring federal spending on drug prevention and, in particular, drug education.

Indeed, 65 percent of congressional candidates polled in 1996 by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America ranked prevention programs as the number one priority in reducing the country's drug problem, compared to just 9 percent for both interdiction and treatment. By the close of 1996, Republicans had abandoned their attempts to reduce the federal

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prevention budget and Clinton had secured extra funds for drug-education programs within the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education.

There is no mystery in the bi-partisan popularity of such education programs. Recently completed large-scale surveys have shown that illicit drug use among young people (primarily in the form of marijuana smoking) increased in the past three years, following more than a decade of steady decline. In the *National Household Survey*, conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services, monthly marijuana use among children between 12 and 17 increased from 4 percent in 1992 to more than 7 percent in 1994 while the perceived risks of use declined. The National Institute on Drug Abuse's *Monitoring the Future Study* showed that this trend was evident among eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders. Among the latter, reported use of any illicit drug during the previous 30 days rose from 14.4 percent in 1992 to 23.8 percent in 1995.

Advocates of drug education, from Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to former drug czar William Bennett, argue that federally funded initiatives of the past 10 years contributed, at least in part, to the decline in adolescent drug taking, and that cuts in federal spending led to the recent increased use. However, unlike other aspects of drug-control policy, prevention or education has been hardly analyzed. Law enforcement and interdiction efforts have been the subject of debate in both the popular press and academic circles, as have such treatments as needle exchange and methadone maintenance. In contrast, prevention is simply assumed to be a laudable enterprise, and, as will be discussed later, the claims of its proponents are uncritically accepted by the press and policy makers. But is it really the case that such programs succeed? And, more particularly, did federal spending on drug-prevention activities play a role in reducing adolescent drug use over the past 10 years?

The rise of drug prevention

Prior to the mid 1980s, the federal drug-prevention budget was $200 million a year or less and was concentrated in just three agencies—the Department of Defense, the Department

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of Labor, and the Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Administration, later renamed the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). By today's standards, the budgets of these agencies were modest. For example, in 1986, the Department of Defense received $85 million,[1] and the other two agencies $45 million each. Only five other federal agencies had drug-prevention budgets prior to 1986—the Corporation for National Service, the Agency for International Development, the Department of Education, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Federal Aviation Administration—and were generally below $10 million per annum.

The federal drug-prevention budget increased almost threefold in real terms in the final years of the Reagan administration (rising from $196 million in 1986 to $582 million in 1988).[2] Much of this was accounted for by the growth in the Department of Education budget, which rose by more than $200 million between 1986 and 1987. Over the next three years, the federal drug-prevention budget almost tripled again. Entirely new initiatives were established in the Department of Health and Human Services through the creation of the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP) and in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The federal drug-prevention budget peaked at just over $1.6 billion in 1992, after which it leveled-off in real terms. It is this leveling off that drug-education advocates maintain helps to explain the recent reversal in the decline of reported drug use among American youth.

What federal dollars buy

Data contained in the National Institute on Drug Abuse's *Monitoring the Future Study*—the main source for tracking adolescent drug use—and ONDCP's *National Drug Control*

[1] Budget figures have been converted to constant 1994 dollars.

[2] Federal spending on all categories of drug-control policies increased substantially during this period as a result of two pieces of legislation—the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. The total drug-control budget rose from $3.9 billion in 1986 to $11 billion in 1990. Although the primary focus of each piece of legislation was on "supply-side" strategies (for example, domestic law enforcement and international drug control or interdiction), "demand-side" strategies focusing on treatment and prevention also expanded from this intensified federal effort.

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Strategy—the primary source for identifying federal expenditures across agencies and functions—enable one to assess the relationship between annual federal expenditures on drug-use prevention and the prevalence of illicit drug use among adolescents. The latter document lists agency drug-control budgets starting in 1981 for a number of broad functions, including interdiction, prosecution, and treatment. Just over 30 agencies are listed in the 1996 *Strategy* as having performed the function entitled "drug abuse prevention" during one or more years between 1981 and 1995, with three—the Department of Education, HUD and SAMHSA—as primary beneficiaries. Together they received more than $1.1 billion of the total $1.5 billion prevention budget in 1995.

The *Monitoring the Future Study* reports data on adolescent drug use from 1975 onwards. I will discuss only the twelfth-grade data, as the reports for eighth and tenth graders do not extend back to 1981 (the first year for which ONDCP data on federal expenditures are available). Specifically, I will focus on 30-day "prevalence of use" of any illicit drug among twelfth graders. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, marijuana has been the most widely used illicit drug among this age group (about 85 percent of those reporting any drug use specify marijuana).

Examination of data contained in the two documents reveals drug use was falling steadily among young people prior to the increase in government spending that occurred in the late 1980s. By 1987, when federal spending really began to accelerate, the proportion of twelfth graders reporting use of any illicit substance had already fallen to 25 percent, from its high of 39 percent in 1979. The figure was down to 17 percent when the federal drug-prevention budget crossed the billion-dollar threshold in 1990. Between 1981 and 1992, 30-day prevalence of illicit drug use fell by three-fifths (from 36.9 percent to 14.4 percent). The rate of decline was virtually the same during years of modest federal spending (1981-1986), as during years of accelerated federal spending (1987-1991). During the former period, the average yearly growth in the drug-prevention budget was $11.5 million, with a corresponding average yearly decline in drug use of 1.7 percent. During the latter period, there was close to a 25-fold increase in the size

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of the average yearly growth of the prevention budget ($281 million per annum), while the average decline in drug use rose by just one-half of 1 percent per year (to 2.2 percent).

Federal budgets, of course, represent less than half of what the nation spends on policies to reduce illicit drug use, even following the huge post-1986 increase. And the level of drug use is influenced by numerous factors other than federally funded initiatives. However, the above statistics are sufficient to address the fundamental issue raised by advocates of current drug-prevention policies and programs—namely, whether a sustained level of federal funding is necessary to reduce drug use among young people. Clearly the impact is negligible. Indeed, federal spending on drug-education programs and activities might have made things worse.

At first glance, this admittedly seems unlikely. The federal budget began to increase five years before the rise in reported drug use. However, it is important to note that the agency budgets listed in the *National Drug Control Strategy* refer to federal appropriations, not actual spending on programmatic activity. These appropriations typically take time to filter down to the state and local level—for example, most of the Drug-Free Schools and Community funds authorized by the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act were not available to local education agencies until early 1988. These agencies had then to recruit staff and to select curricula, before actually implementing their programs. Moreover, the effects of these activities on recipients' drug use would not be evident for some time, perhaps a year or two. Given this, it seems reasonable to assume that there is a lag of three to five years between the appropriation of moneys for drug-prevention programs and the manifestation of their effects on rates of adolescent drug use. Accordingly, the period of rapid federal spending, which commenced in 1987, coincides—closely in the case of a three-year lag, or exactly in the case of a five-year lag—to the period of increased drug use (1992 to 1995).

Testing the new programs

How might federal spending on drug prevention have encouraged drug use? This is a difficult question to answer, as details on exactly how the money is spent are sparse and

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controlled studies of programs rare. However, an examination of school-based-prevention programs—the mainstay of drug prevention in the United States—suggests why drug-prevention activities might have unintended consequences.

Prior to the mid 1980s, there existed little or no research indicating that school-based prevention was an effective means of reducing drug use among young people. Indeed, many researchers believed that such education could do as much harm as good. Writing in the *Journal of Drug Education* in 1980, Michael Goodstadt, a prevention researcher at the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto, concluded that available evidence indicated "that 'negative' program effects were not an isolated phenomena, but occur frequently enough and affect self-reported behavior often enough to require more careful scrutiny." Nor was this opinion exclusively held by academics. The Second Report of the National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse, published in 1973, recommended that policy makers should "seriously consider declaring a moratorium on all drug education programs in schools, at least until programs already in operation have been evaluated and a coherent approach with realistic objectives has been developed."

Opinions differed regarding why prevention efforts could produce increased drug use. Some blamed the content of the programs: Knowledge-based programs of the 1960s and 1970s simply piqued students interest while the values-clarification methods of the mid 1970s confused students in that they failed to condemn drug use unambiguously. But others argued that it was the "zero tolerance" message that was at fault, insofar as it inspired incredulity and skepticism among many young people.

Despite these doubts, by the end of the 1980s, the prevailing wisdom among researchers, educators, and policy makers was that school-based programs could prevent adolescents from using drugs, providing the right type of program was used. And a growing body of empirical evidence, it was argued, demonstrated the effectiveness of a new type of curriculum, based on the principles of social-learning theory, the so-called "social-influence" approach.

Social-influence programs retained the zero-tolerance message of their predecessors—all drug use was considered harm-

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ful and wrong. In addition, however, students were now taught the social skills that were supposedly necessary to remain drug free: In some cases, the programs employed a narrowly focused approach primarily concerned with teaching drug-resistance skills; in others, a broad-based approach was used to enhance a wide range of "life skills." The former type of program, called "resistance-skills training," could be delivered in eight to 10 classroom sessions. The latter, called "social-skills training," took 15 to 20 sessions to deliver. The latter are now more popular, at least among academics and policy makers. (The technique has been applied to problem behaviors other than drug use, for example violence and teen sex.)

The programs attempt to teach "affective techniques," such as assertiveness training, self-esteem enhancement, and improved decision making. A person who possesses these skills, it is argued, is better able to cope with life and, hence, has no reason to experiment with drugs. In short, the underlying assumption is that young people who use drugs are socially incompetent. But there is little empirical evidence to support this idea. A study by Jonathan Shedler and Jack Block, researchers from the University of California at Berkeley, in the 1990 *American Psychologist*, for example, found that adolescents who engaged in experimental drug use were psychologically *better* adjusted than either heavy users or abstainers. Needless to say, this study is seldom cited by prevention advocates.

Moreover, at the time that it was decided to shift to the social-influence approach, there was little evidence to indicate that it was effective. In 1985, Robert Battjes of the National Institute on Drug Abuse published a paper in the *International Journal of the Addictions* which summarized the disappointing findings from evaluations of drug-prevention efforts of the 1970s and also discussed more recent evaluations of social-influence programs and their application to drug abuse in general. Gilbert Botvin, a prevention researcher at Cornell University Medical College, covered similar ground in a review published a year later in the *Journal of School Health*.

Each of these influential reviews discussed the same two studies. The first study, published in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 1979, assessed the effects of a resistance-

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skills training program (which lasted for eight sessions) on seventh-grade students. Students who participated in the program were compared to students (from a different school) who did not. Some 20 months after the intervention, about 8 percent of students in the intervention school reported smoking marijuana in the past week or day compared to 15 percent of the comparison group. However, since there was no baseline assessment of drug use, it is entirely possible that students from the two schools differed before the intervention was delivered. In the second study, published in *Addictive Behaviors* in 1984, seventh-grade students from four schools were randomly assigned to receive a 20-session social-skills training program delivered by classroom teachers; students from four other schools received the same program delivered by "peer leaders"; and those from two additional schools acted as controls. The results: There were significantly fewer students using marijuana in the peer-led group than in the control group, but no differences between the teacher-led group and controls.

Such findings could hardly be called compelling. The social-influence model, which was soon to be heralded as the way forward, had been tested almost exclusively on cigarette smoking, with only two published accounts describing its effects on use of illicit drugs. Yet, by 1986, the federal government would commit more than $200 million to school-based drug-prevention programs through the 1986 Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (part of the broader 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act).

Limitations of Life Skills Training

Some researchers will now admit that drug-education programs do not work. They are especially willing to criticize the widely adopted DARE program. But they are quick to add that the problem is not drug education but the type of program adopted. What is needed is more federal money on "state-of-the-art" programs.

The state-of-the-art program most frequently mentioned in the popular press, as well as in academic journals, is the Life Skills Training (LST) program of Gilbert Botvin. Both the *New York Times* and *Time* recently carried pieces that con-

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trasted the research records of DARE and LST. The largest longitudinal evaluation of the LST program, the *New York Times* noted, showed that

> behavioral changes initiated by the program lasted the entire six years of the study. The use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana among teenagers who had had the program was *half that of similar teen-agers who had not had the program* [emphasis added].

Both the *New York Times* and *Time* concluded that what was needed was for the LST program to be marketed and disseminated with the skill and aggression used for DARE.

The study referred to in both of these articles is a six-year follow-up of about 3,500 adolescents reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1995. Once again, however, careful examination shows that the claims being made on behalf of the program are largely unsupported by the data presented in the article. Among all subjects for whom follow-up data were available, there were no statistically significant differences in illicit drug use between those who received the program and those who did not. Thirteen percent of LST subjects reported monthly marijuana use compared to 14 percent of control subjects; weekly use was 6 percent and 9 percent, respectively. How then does the *New York Times* report reductions of 50 percent in marijuana use?

The answer lies in the fact that the study presents an additional set of analyses based on a so-called "high fidelity" sample. To be included in this group, an individual had to receive at least 60 percent of the intervention over the three-year period during which it was delivered. As a result of this procedure, one-third of the LST group (including students from six entire schools) was removed from the study. A comparison of this refined sample of program recipients with the control subjects produced statistically significant differences. Most noticeably, the proportion reporting weekly use of marijuana was lower in the LST than in the control group—5 percent versus 9 percent. This, presumably, is the 50 percent reduction referred to in the *New York Times* article.

As far as one can determine from the published data, the high-fidelity group represents less than half of those recruited into the intervention at the start of the project. It is a self-

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selected sub-sample that is no longer comparable to subjects in the control group. There are probably many drug-control activities that would appear to be effective under conditions where those who did not receive some ideal "dosage" of intervention are discounted. Moreover, the limited audience penetration obtained by the LST program—and within the context of a research project—does not bode well for its use in the "real world." In the absence of formal monitoring of program implementation and the expenditure of time and money to recruit subjects, participant retention and program fidelity would presumably be even lower.

Thus the findings from the study are hardly what the popular press and the professionals would have us believe. And unfortunately, the weaknesses of the LST programs are common in the field of drug prevention. Another key issue here is the almost total absence of independent evaluation: With very few exceptions, programs are developed, implemented, evaluated, and marketed by the same group of people. Much of the research in this area has a decidedly inductive quality—its goal being to prove that the program under study is effective.

Trust but verify

Despite claims to the contrary, available data do not support the view that the decline in adolescent drug use that occurred between the early 1980s and early 1990s was influenced by the level of federal spending on drug-education activities. Indeed, if one takes into account the fact that the effects of spending do not manifest themselves in actual behavior for at least three years, then increased spending coincided with increased drug use.

The massive increase in federal spending that occurred in the mid 1980s drew a lot of people and programs into the drug-prevention arena in an indiscriminate manner. Politicians apparently believed that there existed sufficient latent skills and expertise to put these moneys to good use—that there were school superintendents, principals, teachers, community activists, local government officials, and others who knew what effective drug prevention was and how to deliver it efficiently to those most in need. They appear to have been mistaken. A good deal of this money went to people with limited experi-

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ence and expertise in drug prevention. It is thus hardly surprising that we often get more, not less, drug use as a result of these activities.

Moreover, nobody really knows what an effective drug-education program would look like. In the mid 1980s, when the federal government began to embrace the social-influence model, there was little evidence that it could reduce drug use. Recent evaluations show that programs that purport to be effective in reducing adolescent experimentation with drugs, do so only when highly self-selected sub-samples are used in data analysis. Contrary to what is now being said in the popular press, these programs are unlikely to have any significant effect on adolescent drug use. There never was, and nor is there now, strong empirical evidence to show that social-influence programs can succeed where previous forms of drug-prevention activities failed.

Where does this leave us? First of all, it is imperative that we avoid the temptation to make lavish claims about other ways of dealing with teenage drug use (e.g., law enforcement, interdiction, or "decriminalization"), simply because the evidence concerning drug prevention is so weak. We need to be guided by evidence concerning the effects of a particular approach on drug use, not by what we hope its effects will be or by the assumed good intentions of those who develop and implement programmatic activities.

With regard to education, the available evidence indicates that we have yet to develop strategies that can significantly reduce illicit drug use among young people. We could almost certainly stop funding certain activities, such as school-based-prevention programs, with no adverse consequences. However, given the bi-partisan popularity of drug education, dramatic reductions in federal drug-prevention funding are unlikely to occur, at least in the near future. In the meantime, local agencies such as school boards and city councils need to establish exactly what their drug-prevention dollars are buying. They should cease funding activities that have the potential to do harm and ensure that claims concerning new, more effective programs are subject to assessment by independent observers. Until that is done no one will know whether education efforts are doing more harm than good.

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In pursuit of criminal justice

JOSEPH M. BESSETTE

DESPITE evidence suggesting that much of American public policy closely—perhaps too closely—mirrors public desires (for example, Social Security, Medicare, and the federal college-loan program), this is hardly the case in how we punish violent criminals. Policy makers and criminal justice practitioners set punishment levels well below what the public considers appropriate. Indeed, our punishment practices reflect a pronounced disconnect between reasonable public opinion, on the one hand, and actual government policy, on the other.

Most Americans are skeptical of their criminal justice system, and properly so. Perhaps the single best measure of their

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dissatisfaction is the answer they give to a question regularly asked by the Gallup organization about the performance of the courts. In 1994, 85 percent of Americans maintained that the courts in their area dealt "not harshly enough" with criminals. There was almost no change in this level of dissatisfaction across a range of socio-demographic variables such as sex, race, age, education, income, and region. Although this question asks specifically about courts, it is likely that respondents treat courts as a surrogate for the entire criminal justice system, not distinguishing, for example, between courts and overly generous parole boards.

There is an empirical basis for the public's suspicion of insufficient harshness. According to the National Punishment Survey conducted by the Population and Society Research Center at Bowling Green State University in 1987, the public recommends prison sentences for a variety of violent and other serious crimes approximately three times longer than offenders actually serve. And, according to U.S. Department of Justice data on actual time served by those leaving state prisons, half the murderers serve seven years or less, half the rapists serve less than four years, half the robbers serve two years and three months or less, half of those convicted of felony assault (often called aggravated assault) serve one year and four months or less, and half the drug traffickers serve one year and two months or less. Altogether, half of the 54,000 violent offenders who were released from prisons in 36 states in 1992 served two years or less behind bars. These data include many offenders with prior records and many convicted of multiple offenses at one time.

Even these figures fail to capture the full picture, for large numbers of those convicted of felonies receive sentences of straight probation (a period of supervision in the community) rather than incarceration. In 1994, state courts throughout the nation sentenced 29 percent of convicted felons to probation with no incarceration—a total of 253,000 offenders, including 2,400 rapists, 5,500 robbers, over 16,000 persons convicted of aggravated assault, and 48,000 drug traffickers. It is hardly conceivable that the American people agree with the granting of straight probation to so many convicted felons and violent offenders.

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Lax criminal codes

Why does our criminal justice system mete out so much less punishment than what the public wants? First, in many cases, state criminal codes are unusually, perhaps even inexplicably, lenient. For example, when in 1978 Minnesota pioneered the use of a sentencing-guidelines grid to rationalize sentencing for convicted felons, it stipulated that a rapist with no prior record serve just two years and five months in prison for his crime (a sentence of 43 months, minus a one-third good-time reduction). Similarly, in California, the presumptive sentence for rape between 1976 and 1994 was six years in state prison (which could drop to three years due to mitigating circumstances or increase to eight years with aggravating circumstances). The formal sentence was subject to various sentence-reduction credits, also stipulated in the penal code, that amounted to 50 percent for most of this period. Thus, until the California state legislature increased the potential punishment for the most serious rapes to an indeterminate 25 years to life in 1994, official state policy called for a mere three years behind bars for most rapes.

This short statutory punishment, together with strict limits on consecutive sentencing, partly explains why even serial rapists in California often serve unconscionably short prison terms for their crimes. Consider Christopher Evans Hubbart who terrorized young women in the suburbs east of Los Angeles in the 1970s and 1980s. Hubbart, whose modus operandi was to surprise women living alone by breaking into their homes in the early morning hours, was convicted in 1972 for raping 14 women. He served six years in state prison. On the very day of his release, he raped again. And, avoiding apprehension, he raped at least nine more women during the next two years. For these 10 new rapes, after being convicted in 1982, he served an additional eight years in prison.

Shortly after this second release, in 1990, Hubbart abducted another woman; this time he was sentenced to five years in prison. Denied early release several times because he failed psychiatric examinations, Hubbart would have been freed unconditionally in 1995 at the age of 45 had California not passed a new law that allowed sexual predators to be sent to a state mental hospital for an additional two years if it could be

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shown in civil court that the offender was still a danger to the community. For his 24 rape convictions (and he was suspected by authorities of many more), Hubbart served a total of 14 years behind bars, an average of seven months per rape.

A no less disturbing example is Richard Allen Davis, the man convicted and sentenced to death in 1996 for kidnapping and murdering 12-year-old Polly Klaas. A properly functioning criminal justice system would not have given Davis the opportunity to murder Polly Klaas. Between 1973 and 1993, Davis was arrested at least 17 times (often for multiple crimes): 10 times for burglary, twice for contributing to the delinquency of a minor, twice for possession of a dangerous weapon, twice for robbery, twice for kidnapping, and once for jail escape, vehicle tampering, possession of marijuana, attempted armed robbery, attempted kidnapping, assault, attempted oral copulation, obstructing a police officer, and auto theft. Four times he escaped while in custody. Five times he was sentenced to probation rather than prison. And, each time on probation, he was rearrested for new crimes or for violating the conditions of his probation.

In addition to these probation sentences, he was sentenced to six months in jail in October of 1973; to six months to 15 years in state prison in August of 1975 (for which he actually served less than one year); to three separate sentences ranging from six months to life in 1977 and 1978 (for which he actually served less than six years); to three years in state prison for crimes committed in March of 1985 to be served concurrently with another sentence of 16 years in state prison in July of 1985 for kidnapping, assaulting, and robbing a woman (for which he actually served just eight years). After Davis completed his first incarceration, he was arrested for a new offense within two months; after his second incarceration, again within two months; and after his third incarceration, within 12 months. Polly Klaas was killed just three months after Davis was released from his fourth prison stay.

While reasonable people may disagree about how tough to be with nonviolent first-timers, the nearly universal feeling among Americans is that repeat violent offenders deserve stiff punishment, much stiffer by far than anything the criminal justice system gave to Richard Allen Davis before he mur-

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dered Polly Klaas. Had California's stringent "three-strikes" law been in effect when Davis began his criminal career, he would have long ago faced a minimum of at least 20 years behind bars, with the further consequence that any subsequent felony conviction, no matter how minor, include another minimum 20 years in prison.

Discretion too far

Another reason why punishments often fall short of public expectations is judicial leniency. Well-publicized reductions in judicial discretion in recent decades, brought about by sentencing guidelines and mandatory minimum-sentencing laws in the federal system and some states, have done little to change this. In the majority of criminal convictions throughout the country, judges retain extraordinary power to choose probation or prison, to determine the length of prison sentences, to throw out collateral convictions, and to impose concurrent or consecutive sentences for the offenders with multiple convictions. Sometimes that discretion is exercised in ways that completely defy reasonable public judgments about just policy.

This was well demonstrated in a 1982 nationally publicized case when Ron Ebens and his stepson Michael Nitz, both unemployed auto workers, beat Chinese American Vincent Chin to death after an argument at a Detroit area bar. (The assault was precipitated by the offenders' belief that Chin was Japanese and thus shared responsibility for the downturn in the American auto industry.) For this crime, in which the offenders waited for Chin outside the bar, and one held him down while the other beat him to death with a baseball bat, the Wayne County judge sentenced the killers to probation and a $3,700 fine.

Early paroles also help explain our system's lenience. Sentences that sound tough when they are handed down (like Richard Allen Davis's three separate prison sentences in 1977 and 1978 of one to 25 years, six months to 10 years, and six months to life) can result in actual time in prison well under the stipulated maximum (Davis actually served less than six years). Indeed, in most states, parole boards retain broad authority to release offenders once they are eligible under state law. The result is that very few come close to serving anything

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like the maximum to which they were sentenced. Nationally, the typical prison inmate serves only slightly more than one-third of his maximum sentence. Even violent offenders serve well under half of their maximum. The fact that a few famous prison inmates such as Charles Manson and Sirhan Sirhan are continually denied parole obscures the broader reality: Nearly all those eligible for parole eventually receive it.

Finally, plea bargaining is often identified as a major cause of light sentences. Given the huge increase in judicial resources that would be necessary to give trials to all indicted felons, prosecutors and judges, it is said, are under enormous pressure to reach an accommodation with the accused: that is, to give them a break on the punishment in exchange for a plea of guilty. And, in fact, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the vast majority of felony convictions in this country are the result of a guilty plea (89 percent) rather than a trial before a judge (5 percent) or jury (6 percent). As expected, those who plead guilty are, crime for crime, less likely to be sentenced to prison than those found guilty after trial. Moreover, if incarcerated, they receive shorter sentences.

Not every plea bargain, however, leads to overly lenient punishment. Indeed, the term itself is deceptive because it implies that all pleas are the result of a bargain. That nine out of 10 felony convictions result from the defendant's voluntary admission of guilt does not itself prove that in all or most of these cases the prosecutor offered a sentence reduction. Defendants, after all, have a right to plead guilty. That those who go to trial get stiffer sentences may reflect the fact that those charged with the most serious robberies, rapes, or assaults have a greater incentive to go to trial and hope for an acquittal. Moreover, in those cases where evidence problems render a conviction problematic, a prosecutor convinced of the defendant's guilt may decide that a few years in prison, or even felony probation, is better than taking the chance that the defendant will "walk." Thus, in some cases, plea bargains may result in more punishment than would a trial.

The invisible hand of leniency

Some argue that the public, despite its dissatisfaction with current punishment levels, is unwilling to pay the costs of

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increased punishment. Yet this hardly seems tenable. Only 1.1 percent of all government spending in this country is devoted to building and operating all of our prisons and to running all of our probation and parole programs. Even doubling or tripling this amount would not raise corrections spending to more than a tiny fraction of all government spending. It is true, of course, that corrections costs are a higher fraction of state-government spending, since state governments finance most of the nation's prisons. But even here the proportion is in the range of 4 percent to 5 percent, far less than what is spent on education and social welfare. With the average American contributing about 30 cents per day to cover the nation's entire correctional budget (including probation and parole), insufficient resources can hardly explain why half the rapists are serving less than four years or why 253,000 convicted felons each year receive a straight probation sentence.

What, then, accounts for the divergence between public opinion and public policy? In important respects punishment policy in the United States is the accumulation of millions of individual decisions each year: decisions about whether to arrest an individual; whether to prosecute him; whether to drop some charges or offer a break on the sentence through a plea bargain; whether to send the convicted offender to probation or prison; whether to imprison those who violate probation; how long to make prison sentences; whether to make sentences for multiple crimes concurrent or consecutive; whether to rescind good-time credits for misbehavior in prison; whether to parole from prison eligible offenders; and whether to return to prison those who violate the conditions of release. While we have excellent statistical information on the aggregate results of these decisions, the public is still essentially ignorant, in all but a few high-publicity cases each year, of the specific punishment decisions made in their community.

Consider Cook County, Illinois, which includes the city of Chicago and some of its suburbs. In 1995, the Cook County court system, one of the largest in the country, disposed of 44,855 felonies and 340,880 misdemeanors. For the felony cases alone there were 2,528 trials before a judge and 416 before juries. Sentences to prison totaled 17,377 and sentences to probation 17,680. This means that, during an aver-

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age week, the courts disposed of 863 felonies, held 49 trials before a judge and eight before a jury, and sentenced 334 offenders to prison and 340 to probation. (And these averages exclude over 6,500 misdemeanors disposed of each week, many of which involve crimes that most Americans would also consider serious.)

When the volume of serious crimes moving through a court system is so high, we cannot expect more than a tiny fraction of the cases to receive any extended publicity, no matter how vigilant the press. Perhaps a few crimes each week will attract major press attention—drive-by shootings, bank robberies, child abductions, etc.—and, if they are sensational enough, the attention will last throughout the trial (if there is one) and sentencing. But it is a rare crime that can sustain press attention all the way to sentencing and a rarer one still that will result in press comment when the offender, if sentenced to prison, is eventually released. The proportion of punishment decisions for serious crimes that receive press attention will likely be higher in smaller communities than in big cities; yet it is in the big cities where the crime problem is most serious, and thus it is precisely here where the public knows the least about actual punishment decisions. (In a recent series on homicide, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that it wrote stories on only 15 percent of the homicides that occurred in Los Angeles County from 1990 to 1994.)

It follows that, in the vast majority of criminal cases, those who make the actual punishment decisions are free to do as they will within the usually broad confines of applicable state law. This allows two factors to come into play that help to weaken punishment. One is organizational overload. The thousands of criminal cases each year that are processed by county courts tax the resources of prosecutors, public defenders, judges, and local jail officials. As one veteran deputy district attorney told a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times* in 1990:

> We don't have enough courtrooms or judges or prosecutors, and if you're a deputy D.A., you have to move the paper. If you don't move the paper, you're not going to be in that courtroom very long because the judge or your supervisor is going to get rid of you.

Similarly, prison officials are faced with the daunting task

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of managing growing prison populations in facilities that were typically designed to house many fewer inmates. It is not surprising that those who run prisons often support generous good-time policies, early-release mechanisms, or accelerated paroles in order to move bodies through the institution.

The other factor is the set of ideas about punishment that govern the thinking of criminal justice decision makers. Those who work within the system do not share the broader public's judgments about punishment, and they are, for the most part, free from public scrutiny. Many hold views closer to those of Ramsey Clark or Karl Menninger than to those of the average citizen. Clark, just a few years after serving as U.S. Attorney General for Lyndon Johnson, wrote that "punishment as an end in itself is itself a crime in our times." Clark endorsed the views of psychiatrist Karl Menninger, who maintained that punishment is "our crime against criminals—and, incidentally, our crime against ourselves. We must renounce the philosophy of punishment, the obsolete, vengeful penal attitude."

During the 1950s and 1960s, states made rehabilitation rather than punishment the central principle of penal policy. Probation became more widely used, along with indeterminate sentences, and liberal release practices. Parole boards began assessing the prisoner's fitness for release, not whether he had suffered a punishment commensurate with his crime. The predominance of this ideology of rehabilitation explains why the nation's prison population did not increase between 1960 and 1975 (and actually declined between 1960 and 1968) at the very time when serious crimes reported to the police more than tripled (from 3.4 million to 11.3 million), when the violent crimes of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault increased three and one-half times (from 288,000 to one million), and when arrests for serious crimes increased two and one-half times.

Despite the fact that the rehabilitation approach has fallen out of public favor—and one now rarely hears it publicly defended as the basis for sentencing adult offenders—approximately three-fourths of the states still retain the essential mechanisms of the rehabilitation ideology: the indeterminate sentence and discretionary parole-board release.

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The good sense of the people

The National Punishment Survey revealed that the public is more discerning and reasonable than the critics of tougher punishment—who so often decry the public's supposed mindless thirst for vengeance—are willing to concede. For example, the public's recommendations were highly sensitive to the relative seriousness of the crime. The average recommended time in prison was 15 to 17 years for rape; three to 10 years for robbery, depending on the presence of a weapon and whether the victim was injured; six to eight years for assault, depending on the extent of injury; and two to five years for burglary, depending on the amount stolen and whether the target was a commercial building or a home. Within the same crime categories, greater victim injury and increased property loss always resulted in higher recommended punishment.

Consider the four robbery scenarios outlined in the survey. In the first, the offender did not have a weapon but threatened to harm the victim unless the victim gave him money; the victim gave $10 and was not harmed. For this offense, 72 percent of the respondents recommended prison as the most severe sanction with an average term of three years and 10 months. In the second scenario, the facts were the same but for the addition of a weapon. For this robbery, 75 percent of the respondents recommended prison with an average term of five years and eight months. In the third scenario, the offender robbed the victim at gun point of $1,000 and wounded him seriously enough to require hospitalization. Here 92 percent of the respondents recommended prison with an average term of 10 years and three months. In the fourth scenario, the offender shot the victim to death when the victim struggled during the robbery attempt. For this robbery and homicide, 30 percent of the respondents recommended the death penalty and another 67 percent recommended prison as the most serious penalty with an average term of 26 years.

Not only were the results of the survey highly responsive to variations in crime seriousness, there was no evidence here that Americans want to lock them up and throw away the key, for any but the most violent criminals. In a word, the results of the survey seem eminently reasonable, however much tougher

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the American people are than the criminal justice system that operates in their name.

In its critique of the findings of the National Punishment survey, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, one of the nation's leading anti-punishment groups, likened asking Americans what punishments they would mete out to criminals to

> questions such as "How many nuclear warheads does the U.S. need to defend against attack?" or "What proportion of deposits should banks hold in reserve to protect their customers?" Asking people who are generally uninformed very specific policy questions may reveal their state of ignorance, but their responses could hardly be taken seriously as the basis for policy making.

Thus it does not matter how much punishment the American people think is appropriate for murderers, rapists, robbers and burglars because, apparently, punishing criminals is a technical matter like designing strategic defense systems or fashioning the details of banking policy. Policy makers, it follows, are free to ignore the desires of an "uninformed" public.

Yet deciding how much punishment an offender deserves involves a moral judgment, not a technical one. To say that the moral judgments of the American people should not "be taken seriously as the basis for policy making" is to reject no less than democracy itself.

Justice for all

Although complete freedom from crime is an unrealistic goal, a substantial reduction in serious and violent crime is not. The most constructive way to move toward that reduction, building upon recent encouraging trends, is to embrace standards of just punishment that approximate reasonable public judgments. Here the challenge lies primarily with state legislatures, for they are the original source of our punishment policies and practices. If the state penal codes themselves prescribe punishments well below public standards, then they should be rewritten and brought into line with public opinion. If judges are too lenient in how they exercise their sentencing discretion, then the legislature can establish presumptive sentences or mandatory minimums for serious offenders or re-

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cidivists. If parole boards are too generous in granting releases from prison, then parole can be restricted or even abolished (as about one-fourth of the states have done during the past two decades). And if insufficient judicial resources are resulting in large punishment discounts through plea bargaining, then the legislature should authorize and fund more judges, prosecutors, and public defenders.

By bringing punishment more in line with public judgments about what offenders deserve, we will incapacitate recidivists, more effectively deter would-be criminals, and enhance public confidence in our governing institutions. Finally, by reaffirming and enforcing the precepts of the moral order, we can provide essential institutional support for the good efforts of parents, preachers, and teachers to fashion a law-abiding community.

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Public housing as a "poorhouse"

HOWARD HUSOCK

FEW events in recent U.S. policy history have had the resonance of the 1972 demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis. By tearing down the 33 11-story buildings, once home to 10,000 residents, the government acknowledged, perhaps for the first time, that an important social program could go seriously awry; soon afterwards, Pruitt-Igoe entered policy discussion as an event and a metaphor.

As dramatic as it was, however, and as often as it has been referenced, the government's dynamiting of Pruitt-Igoe did not signal a new era in public housing. The sort of problems that had motivated authorities to give up on Pruitt-Igoe—poor construction, rampant crime, and a design that contributed to social disorder—appeared to plague many housing projects; but few of these suffered the fate of Pruitt-Igoe. Richard Nixon, in 1973, did order a freeze on new public and otherwise subsidized housing construction. His administration, however, did not take major steps—and in this it set a model for

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subsequent administrations—to rid the country of troubled, existing projects. That turn of events has awaited Clinton. Without fanfare anywhere close to that which accompanied the Pruitt-Igoe demolition, Clinton's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced plans, in October of last year, to demolish 100,000 units of "substandard" public housing, a significant percentage of the existing 1.4 million units, by the year 2000. The administration has already funded the demolition of 46,000 units.

Clinton's plan

What should we make of this? Are we, at long last, giving up on public housing? Should we be? A strong case can be made in the affirmative—but that is not what the Clinton administration is doing, HUD's demolition plans notwithstanding. The new HUD policy, it turns out, does not presage, any more than Pruitt-Igoe did, an end to the dream of good public housing. Instead, it has set the stage, in HUD's phrase, to "transform" public housing and, arguably, to rehabilitate an idea that had lost favor. This becomes clear when one learns that the demolition policy is linked with major renovations (the so-called "Hope VI" program) of projects in 74 cities and, strikingly, the construction of 4,000 new public-housing apartments. In other words, demolition, rather than being the end of the road, is but a new fork. We are set to try again, this time through a combination of large-scale renovations of existing projects and the construction of what HUD believes will be—because of better design and a better socio-economic "mix" of tenants—a new, improved, and sustainable public housing.

There can be little doubt that, at least in the near term, the administration's investment of three-quarters of a billion dollars will improve the physical condition of public housing. The newly constructed units will avoid high-density, high-rise construction, what HUD calls the deadly sin of public housing. It is likely that the new units will be better, at least at first, if only because they will be new. But all this begs the larger question.

Why should we continue to operate public housing at all? In rushing to repair—and perhaps even expand—public hous-

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ing, the administration risks a number of crucial errors. To begin with, it is apparent that the administration aims to "save" public housing as an end in itself. Why else would it advocate and fund a new generation of public housing to "solve" the problems created by an older generation of public housing? More public housing will not solve the problem of public housing. Indeed, we need to consider the real alternative: Let all or most public-housing stock melt into the private housing market (though perhaps retain some projects as temporary housing for those in dire straits); abolish public-housing authorities; and address the social problems of public-housing residents by means of the general welfare laws and programs.

The "housers" utopian vision

That we have public housing at all is the result of a long-running campaign, culminating in the National Housing Act of 1937, on the part of a housing movement that never imagined it was creating a social problem. Public-housing advocates, led by such activists as Catherine Bauer (author of the 1934 book, *Modern Housing*), asserted that housing, for as much as two-thirds of the population, should be provided by government, as a sort of public utility. In effect, "housers," as these advocates were known, believed that the incomes of a majority of Americans would never be high enough to purchase sufficiently safe and sanitary dwellings. Public housing was a form of income redistribution, which the housers considered as important as public education. There was a utopian, "environmental determinism" side to the movement, as well. Housers dreamed of model communities with playgrounds and recreation centers where the social classes would mix—and whose cleanliness and educative ambiance would assist the uplift of the downtrodden.

But, as the historian Alexander von Hoffman has pointed out, housing advocates, over the next two decades, lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the American public to the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Chartered in 1934, three years previous to the advent of federally financed public housing, the FHA's publicly financed low-interest mortgages fueled the boom in modest single-family homes that transformed the American countryside and social structure. The

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million and one-half public-housing units that were built paled in number to the nation's Levittowns. Fairly quickly, public housing became the province only of the poorest—hardly the housers' original vision of socially integrated model communities. In other words, public housing is to the FHA and the single-family home, as homeopathy is to modern medicine—a movement whose remnants can still be found but which failed to carry the day.

That it has persisted is testament to the power of two ideas: first, that the period before public housing was a sort of horror show, a "bad-old-days," laissez-faire period that supposedly makes a prima facie case for continued public action; second, that there was a sort of public-housing golden age in the immediate post-war years which demonstrates that, with the right management and mix of tenants, public housing can, indeed, succeed.

The bad old days?

There is no doubt that, with the growth of American cities in the latter half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, abject housing conditions developed. As the New York Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor put it, shortly prior to the enactment in 1867 of the city's first "tenement house" regulations, "Crazy old buildings, crowded rear tenements in filthy yards, dark, damp basements, leaking garrets, shops, outhouses and stables converted into dwellings, though scarcely fit to shelter brutes, are habitations of thousands of our fellow human beings in this wealthy Christian city." The long march from that observation—on a road mapped by such housers as Jacob Riis (*How the Other Half Lives*, 1891), Lawrence Veiller (*Housing Reform*, 1910), Edith Elmer Wood (*Recent Trends in American Housing*, 1931), and Catherine Bauer—to publicly financed housing operated by public authorities not sullied by the profit motive seemed inevitable.

In making their case, however, the advance guard of the housing movement had to ignore or discount vast changes that were taking place in the urban housing market, changes that accommodated both the need for better housing and the aspiration of Americans for private ownership. Indeed, the dis-

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tinctive faces of many American cities are the product of the private residential builders of the era from 1890 to 1930. Their forms are quite familiar to us: the brownstones of Brooklyn, the row homes of Philadelphia and Baltimore, the "three-decker" frame homes of Boston and New England's mill towns, the duplexes and "four-plexes" of Chicago, the bungalows of Oakland. Although the housing movement, to the extent it noticed, looked down on such affordable housing, it attracted the positive notice of those tracking the fortunes of new immigrants. The sociologists Robert Woods and Albert Kennedy, writing in 1915, described the new three-decker districts of Boston as a "zone of emergence" in which the lower middle class joined the economic mainstream.

Thus the housers were mistaken to think that the housing conditions of their day were permanent and thus in need of a publicly financed replacement. Not only did they underestimate the market's ability to respond to housing needs, they ignored the role that different forms of housing play in the social structure. People build better neighborhoods as part of the process of improving their fortunes. To do this, they must have access to incrementally different types of housing, such that they can move up from one to the next. In order to go from tenement to suburb (perhaps over more than one generation), one may need to go first to a slightly better walk-up rental, then to a rental unit in someone's two- or three-family house, then to one's own attached house, and finally to one's own detached house. (Today, this route could lead through mobile homes or freeway-exit condominium complexes.)

The many forms of housing taken together comprise what I call the "housing ladder," a combination of physical and social structures with a multitude of distinct, but close-together, rungs. What some decry as economic stratification should be seen as part of the dynamic that motivates the construction of the "built environment" of cities, as well as the hard work of families. Put simply, people want to live in a better neighborhood, and a variegated housing stock provides ways to differentiate neighborhoods and to signal personal achievement.

Even in the poorest of old tenement neighborhoods—whose abject conditions still linger in our collective unconscious—there was much more going on than rapacious slumlords tak-

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ing advantage of the economically weak. In its 1894 investigation of housing conditions (*Slums of Great Cities*), the office of the Commissioner of Labor Statistics found that, even in the poorest neighborhoods of Chicago, 36 percent of families lived either in homes they owned or buildings in which the owner lived. (If one thinks of boarders as, in some sense, renting from an on-site manager, the "owner-presence" ratio would have been even higher.) The historian Oliver Zunz, based on his study of largely self-built, working-class neighborhoods in Detroit, has found that

> working class immigrants owned their homes proportionately more often than middle-class, native white Americans. As a result of the high rate of home ownership and the plethora of single-family dwellings, only limited sections of Detroit resembled physical ghettos.

A 1907 Immigration Commission investigation of similarly poor neighborhoods found that "84 in every 100 homes studied are kept in either good or fair condition." And the 1909 President's Homes Commission study of Washington, D.C., found that such decent, if not perfect, neighborhoods were also inexpensive: A majority of families surveyed paid only 17.5 percent or less of their income in rent. What looked, from the perspective of the reformers, to be neighborhoods of hopeless degradation were really housing opportunities for the poor.

A golden age?

But perhaps none of this matters if public housing provides an adequate replacement. Why not spare people the lower rungs of the ladder? The reasons are numerous. They include the effects of public housing on the neighborhoods around it, the difficulty of maintaining publicly owned structures, as well as harm done to a neighborhood's "social capital" or social fabric. The role projects play in undermining neighborhoods around them is more than a spillover of criminal behavior and such. By competing with small, "tenement" landlords, publicly subsidized housing—offering, at least at first, amenities that private providers can't supply—softens the rental market at the lower rungs of the housing ladder, making neighborhoods

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shabbier. The advent of the projects interferes, too, with the social dynamics of surrounding neighborhoods. By rewarding need and not achievement, public housing offers the same "neighborhood" to all comers. Those who work and strive are deprived of an opportunity to distinguish themselves from those who do not.

Then there is the incorrect view, held by many advocates of public housing, that the purposes of specific buildings are fixed. Defenders of existing public- and subsidized-housing developments argue that apartment buildings must, through public funds, "be kept affordable." In a living city, however, change is the norm. The dynamics of markets, of changing transportation modes, even of fashion push some neighborhoods up in value and others down. Thus do cities both shape, and adapt to, the needs of residents. Public-housing complexes, because of their inherent inadaptability, stymie the process of invention and reinvention.

Some argue in response that public housing properly prevents poor areas from becoming gentrified; for, it is said, the poor cannot adapt to changes in the housing market. It is true that public housing is meant to shield its residents from fluctuations in the real estate market. But this also means that such neighborhoods are, as a result, deprived of the potential growth in their economy and tax base that benefits everyone. Moreover, there is something patronizing in the view that those of modest means cannot fashion their own healthy neighborhoods in areas that have become "affordable" by virtue of decline in middle-class demand or the sheer modesty of their residential structures.

There is also the serious question whether even the most ostensibly well-built, creatively designed project is long sustainable. Those who harken back to a public-housing golden age, when the working poor predominated, and when the projects were said to have been a way station on the path to the middle class, ignore the fact that such a phenomenon is almost always temporary.

When public housing is new and offers amenities that outstrip those of private competitors, projects can, for a time, attract working families in search of a good deal. But this is not sustainable. First, the supply of private-sector housing can

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rise, drawing families out of the projects. Second, public authorities can rarely do a good job of maintenance as time goes by—making it hard to attract good replacement families. Poor maintenance has often been ascribed to the high-rise design of select projects; this is the argument put forward by the 1992 final report of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, which laid the groundwork for the current HUD initiatives. The report overlooks, however, that maintenance problems are hardly confined to a few high-rise projects. As Roger Krohn and E. Berkley Fleming have shown, in traditional, low-income, privately owned housing, much of the maintenance occurs through the informal economy—cheap rents in exchange for labor, for instance. The bureaucracy of housing authorities, with their need to pay union wages and bid repair work, inevitably increases the expense of maintenance. Obviously, the more expensive maintenance is, the more likely it will be done on the cheap or deferred or—worse yet—not done at all.

HUD's new mission

Given the problems with public housing, why are its goals expanding? The purpose is no longer to provide housing for the masses, something the private market does quite well. Instead, public housing is now to serve a social welfare role for its clientele, which is exclusively the poor. (The average income of public-housing residents is a mere 17 percent of the national median.)

"Our transformation of public housing," said former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros,

> [will help] many of its three million residents, most of them children and their single mothers, to dramatically turn around their lives. Because of this federal assistance, many families living in public housing will move from welfare to work. Many will eventually move from public housing to private housing.

This is to be accomplished both by changing "the physical landscape of public housing" and providing residents with "training, education, child care, and job placement services."

There is, however, an inherent contradiction in such an approach. As a practical matter, the greater the amenities

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provided for public-housing residents, the less the likelihood that the private, lower-income housing market could match them. Thus the incentive to move up and out would be undermined. In effect, the goal of fixing up the projects works at cross purposes with the goal of encouraging residents to find private-housing alternatives. Moreover, by targeting the very poor, HUD creates a great many complications. For instance, only a small percentage of those who qualify, by income, for public housing will find space in a project. (Nationally, only one-third of all families judged qualified for any sort of housing subsidy actually receive one; such assistance has never been an entitlement.) So, if residents were actually to leave the projects, how would we decide whom to help next? We could target the poorest of the poor—but that approach runs counter to the persistent, utopian vision of public housing as a mixed-income community, in which the social classes peacefully co-exist, as well as counter to our current belief that a very poor community is overwhelmingly likely to be a place of crime and disorder.

There are incentive-related problems with other new HUD initiatives as well. For instance, HUD has made clear that it will strive to retain or even introduce non-poor residents to the projects, with the goal of improving the social fabric. "HUD will continue policies that enable working families to live in public housing, serving as role models for residents on welfare," Cisneros has said. This policy, too, poses an internal contradiction. For one of the chief rewards of work and economic advancement is the ability to move to a better neighborhood—one in which more people are working, maintaining their properties, and taking an interest in public safety. However, cheap rent provides an incentive either to move into or remain in public housing. HUD policies thereby diminish the incentive to work and advance, in effect paying certain families to serve as de facto social workers. Nor is there any particular reason to believe, other than the romantic, that the working poor will lead the underclass to the promised land. Even advocates of the mixed-income approach concede that empirical studies to date have been inconclusive as to its benefits.

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There is a similar perverse incentive problem related to new HUD proposals to expand public housing's social welfare role. There is "the new Campus of Learners, which will provide public-housing residents with training in computers, telecommunications and other job skills," as well as a "Jobs-Plus" program designed with the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. It is unclear, however, why there should be counseling and education programs designed specifically for public-housing residents, distinct from what is available to welfare recipients not in public housing. Are they more "disadvantaged" than the 75 percent of welfare recipients living in private housing? Moreover, even if these new initiatives prove successful, they would provide one more incentive to the poor to move to public housing. Such welfare-type programs, if they are effective, should be administered by Health and Human Services and state public-assistance agencies—and offered universally.

A blueprint for reform

There are two logical ways to address the public-housing system in its present state. First, it could serve as a contemporary poorhouse—temporary housing of last resort for the most indigent. Second, much of it could simply be sold off to private buyers, interested either in developing the land or operating the buildings. Extricating ourselves from the current crisis probably requires pursuing both approaches at the same time.

It can be argued that public housing—despite the vision that it would be for most everyone—has in effect already evolved into our contemporary version of the nineteenth-century poorhouse—an institution that made tenure temporary and work or other self-improvement measures mandatory. A time limit on the tenure of new public-housing residents would be in keeping with recent welfare reforms, which impose their own time limits. Currently, some 70 percent of public-housing residents move out over a 10-year period. This turnover provides an opening to introduce a replacement population whose tenure, from the first, would be limited—thus reducing the overall need for public-housing units and improving the skills and habits of the residents.

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In addition to such a poorhouse model, we must face squarely the other alternative: phasing out public housing altogether. It is one thing, of course, to urge the phase out of public housing. It is quite another to chart a transition away from it. This is an undeniably complex task. It can involve relocating tenants, disposing of property, and dismantling public agencies with distinct legal obligations. In the cities with extensive public-housing systems—particularly New York, San Juan, Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia—any change must inevitably be gradual. There are, however, some strategies to consider.

Privatization. Some projects have commercial value. The sale of these assets, with some tenure protections for current tenants, should be considered. Privately owned housing that was formerly public could finance renovation through the capital markets, thereby eventually generating property-tax revenues for city governments. Moreover, asset sales—of land, as well as of buildings—can help support the continuing (perhaps interim) operation of those projects for which there is no private market. And before old projects are demolished, and before new public housing is built in its stead, privatization of the old buildings should be restored. We must recognize that increasing the housing supply overall indirectly increases the supply of "affordable" housing. (It is hard to understand, for instance, why Chicago is choosing to rebuild the troubled Cabrini-Green project, rather than using the proceeds of potential development in the commercially attractive near North Side neighborhood to support housing-authority operations elsewhere. Or why Boston is proposing to spend $50 million for a new Mission Hill housing project, to be built on the commercially valuable site of the present project, adjacent to the city's hospital district.)

I would emphasize that privatization of the ownership and management of public-housing buildings as rental complexes differs from recent attempts, begun under former HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, to sell units to tenants. The latter effort has not gotten far (for instance, units in Denver that were sold off as cooperative apartments have reverted to the local public-housing authority), nor should we expect it to get far. Asking very poor tenants to take responsibility for a large,

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aging physical plant is not a practical way to proceed.

Population attrition. If we do not replace tenants as they leave, natural turnover will gradually reduce the public-housing population. (Annual turnover is approximately 15 percent, though such figures may mask greater turnover among the non-elderly population, who are largely massed in their own "family" projects.) By not renting to new families, we may also discourage the formation of many new, single-parent families: HUD surveys show that 48 percent of new public-housing tenants are seeking apartments not to escape substandard housing but to find housing for their new household. At the same time, a private market in low-income neighborhoods would develop, since it no longer need compete with public housing. This would likely include everything from older buildings that have been modestly renovated to poor homeowners renting out rooms. Such arrangements, while they may not meet the original housers' high standards of space and comfort, would facilitate the growth of social cohesion in poor neighborhoods. Of course, a core of the very poor would likely remain in a reduced version of public housing for some time to come.

Differential rent levels. In keeping with the "housing ladder" concept described above, local housing authorities should be given the flexibility to set different rents for more or less desirable projects, rather than having all rents tied, as at present, to the income level of tenants. If there is greater demand (as evidenced by the numbers on a waiting list) for one project over another, higher rents will not only help apportion a scarce commodity but will help those who are employed distance themselves from those who are not. In time, the income from these higher rents, as well as the character profile of those who went into such buildings, may make them more attractive to private buyers.

Retain emergency housing. Phasing out public housing does not preclude our retaining some sort of emergency family housing—either in former public-housing buildings or elsewhere. Offering short-term, time-limited relief for families in need is quite different from attempting to operate a full-blown, alternative housing system—the original vision of the housers.

Short-term vouchers to encourage move-outs. Housing

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vouchers, which have gained some currency as an alternative to "bricks and mortar" subsidized housing construction, pose many problems of their own. Like public housing, they continue to reward need, not accomplishment. The influx of voucher holders risks destabilizing otherwise working-class neighborhoods, as well. Nonetheless, phasing out public housing could mean that there will be occasions in which only small numbers of tenants remain in large buildings—which might otherwise be sold or demolished. In such instances, it may make sense to offer tenants time-limited housing vouchers so that they might rent on the open market.

Housing-code standards. Even with a phase out of public housing, there is still an important role for government: Local housing policy can help ensure "decent and sanitary" quarters. Traditionally, this has been done through relatively stringent housing-code standards, which, if enforced, raise expenses beyond what the poor can afford. Rather than the traditional approach, we might consider property tax relief for owners of rental property in the poorest census tracts. And we could limit housing-code enforcement to only crucial safety matters. The goal would be to let the private housing market work within only those constraints that relate to health and safety—and to disregard aesthetic considerations.

Home improvement

At this point, six decades after embarking on our first federally funded housing projects, our goal should not be to save public housing but to acknowledge its essential flaws: Those with enough income do not need it and will avoid it; and those with little income are ill-served by it—both because public authorities make bad landlords and because public ownership undermines the sort of social fabric that the poor need if they are to advance. The vision of the original housers of a publicly financed and operated housing system serving the vast majority of the population has never taken root, leaving us with public housing that does not fit into our social structure. Our continued efforts to save public housing have failed: We have simply created new and worse slums. The time has come for us to let people build the best communities they can, for themselves.

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School choice builds community

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SCHOOL choice poses a fundamental challenge to the age-old concept of neighborhood schools. So, unsurprisingly, it has been surrounded by intense controversy. Despite this, school choice is spreading. Back in 1987, Minnesota became the first state to approve school choice. Less than a decade later, over half the states had considered, many of them adopting, some school-choice reform. In a handful of cities—New York, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Montclair, New Jersey—school-choice reforms have been in existence for much longer. Many others—Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee—have recently followed their lead.

One of the frequent arguments made against school choice is that it disrupts community or that it turns an important civil institution such as the school into a market-like enterprise. The supposed result: Parents and families act as private consumers seeking a better product rather than as citizens looking after the commonweal. We argue that the benefits of school choice accrue not only to the individual as consumer but to the broader community as well. That higher levels of consumer satisfaction follow from school choice is becoming increasingly evident. What our study shows is that school choice also has public benefits in the form of more robust civic involvement—or, as it is now popularly called, "social capital."

Our analysis compares parental behavior in two pairs of school districts. We analyze the effects of choice on the formation of social capital in two inner-city school districts: One with considerable choice and one without much choice We

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then replicate this analysis in two suburban school districts. In both cases, the pairs are demographically similar, differing mainly in how much school choice they offer.

We interviewed approximately 300 parents of children in public school, grades kindergarten through eighth, across four districts. The first pair of districts we compare are located in New York City. District 4 has used choice programs for more than 20 years; District 1 has recently introduced choice, but in a limited fashion. The two other school districts discussed here are located in suburban New Jersey. One is in Morristown, which strictly maintains assignment to neighborhood schools; the other is in Montclair, which has had school choice since the 1970s.

DISTRICT 4 is located in Manhattan's East or "Spanish" Harlem, one of the poorest communities in New York City. The District serves roughly 12,000 students from pre-kindergarten through the ninth grade. In the early 1970s, District 4 ranked lowest of the city's 32 public-school districts in math and reading scores. In response, the district instituted a system of school choice.

Years before, the administration of New York City's public-school system was decentralized to allow for greater community control. Thirty-two separate community school districts were established, each governed by both an elected community board and the central Board of Education. (Meanwhile, New York City high schools remained under the exclusive authority of the Board of Education.) The new decentralized system allowed reformers to institute choice at the district level.

Such favorable conditions might have gone unexploited if not for the leadership of Anthony Alvarado, District 4's superintendent from 1972 to 1982. Alvarado bent rules, attracted outside grants, and won support for choice from powerful teacher and principal unions. When Alvarado first took over as superintendent, District 4 ran a traditional neighborhood school program. It had 22 schools in 22 buildings with students assigned to schools on the basis of neighborhood location. The first alternative school, Central Park East Elementary, was developed in 1974. It was followed by an alternative program for seventh and eighth graders with serious emotional and behavioral problems and then by the East Harlem Performing Arts School, a fourth- through ninth-grade program. These

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schools exercised great flexibility over staffing, use of resources, organization of time, and forms of assessment. Perhaps more importantly, they engaged parents and took steps to facilitate their involvement.

District 1, the other Manhattan district we examined, is located on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Also largely Hispanic and poor, its residents are quite similar to District 4 residents. District 1 was created out of the Two Bridges School District, one of the most active districts in New York City's fights over school decentralization in the 1960s. The Community School Board was marked by continual bickering over a variety of issues, including the choice and tenure of the district superintendent. Despite the attention it drew early on, the schools foundered. In 1992, following the success of District 4, District 1 started a limited choice program—but only a small number of alternative schools were created.

How do the two districts measure up? District 4 has earned a reputation in the city and in the nation as an innovative, successful district. There is a sense of mission evident among parents, teachers, and administrators. While there is some dispute about how much of the success can be attributed to choice per se, there is no question that performance in District 4 improved as choice was implemented. In contrast, District 1 has faced considerable turmoil in general as well as acute problems like heavy administrative turnover.

WITH this general background in place, we can now turn to our major goal: assessing the degree to which giving parents more direct control over the schools their children attend increases levels of social capital. In our analysis we use four measures of social capital, three of which are directly derived from the work on social capital done by Robert Putnam of Harvard University and Francis Fukuyama of George Mason University; the fourth is a logical extension of these.

The first measure of social capital we employ is whether or not the parent is a member of the PTA. Second, we asked parents if, in the past year, they had engaged in any volunteer activities for their child's school. The third measure we use, which reflects the "spontaneous sociability" that Fukuyama says bolsters "face-to-face democracy," is the number of parents who talk with other parents about school matters. Our final measure reflects how much parents trust their child's teacher.

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To estimate the effects of choice on social capital, we undertook a statistical analysis to control for the non-random "assignment" of parents across alternative schools. In other words, because some parents have chosen to choose we must explicitly control for the effects of this behavior in our study.[1] Taking into account this process of self-selection, we constructed a model relating parental characteristics to behaviors that create social capital. This model allowed us to isolate the effects of choice and identify how choice affects the likelihood of a parent engaging in each of the four activities associated with social capital. Thus, in the discussion that follows, we identify the effects of choice after these other factors are accounted for.

We found that choice greatly enhanced social capital. For example, participation in the PTA among parents whose children attend choice schools was 13 percent higher than among parents who kept their children in neighborhood schools. In addition, parents participating in choice schools were over 12 percent more likely to engage in voluntary activities at their schools than were non-choosers. We found the same effects in our measure of "spontaneous sociability": Parents in choice schools engaged in more face-to-face discussion with their neighbors about the schools—on average, they talked with almost twice as many parents in the last year as non-choosers. Finally, we found that alternative school choosers are almost 10 percent more likely to trust teachers all or most of the time than were other parents.

GIVEN the multitude of problems facing cities, these are obviously important findings. The next question is equally important: Does this relationship hold among middle-income suburban parents who now compose a larger share of the American population than do central-city residents?

Our second set of paired communities are Montclair and Morristown. Both are in suburban New Jersey, within commuting distance of New York City. In both places, court-ordered-desegregation decisions in the 1970s led to fundamental changes in the school-assignment mechanisms. However,

[1] Details on this procedure can be found in "Institutional Arrangements and the Creation of Social Capital: The Effects of School Choice." Mark Schneider, Paul Teske, Melissa Marschall, Michael Mintrom, and Christine Roch. *American Political Science Review* 91 (January 1997): 82-93.

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they had different ideas about how to achieve racial balance. Montclair adopted school choice, with parents given the right to choose schools from kindergarten on through the eighth grade (there is only one high school), but with choice constrained by racial balancing. In Morristown, residential zones were created for neighborhood schools.

When we look at social capital in the two communities, we see that the patterns are consistent with the results in New York City. Montclair parents are significantly more likely than Morristown parents to belong to the PTA (by about 13 percent), to engage in volunteer work at their school, and to trust teachers (both by about 6 percent). Moreover, Montclair parents also talk to more parents than do parents in Morristown.

OUR research suggests that the design of the institutions delivering local public goods can influence levels of social capital. The act of school choice, in these examples, has stimulated parents to become more involved in a wide range of school-related activities. School choice, far from atomizing citizens or turning them into mere consumers, helps build communities of concerned and engaged parents. School choice can do this in suburban communities, where most Americans now live, and in inner-city neighborhoods, where the stock of social capital may be most depleted and where its absence may have the most deleterious effects.

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All about growth

IRWIN M. STELZER

COMPUTERS are the opiate of the economist masses. Because it is now so cheap to "crunch" huge volumes of data, economists can devise elaborate equations and plug in millions of numbers with ease. They can also produce publishable material, which is so much more important than old-fashioned, good teaching in determining who receives the coveted tenure that forever relieves academic economists from reliance on market forces for their livelihoods. No need to determine whether the data accurately represent what they purport to represent; no need to ask a question of any interest to practical men of affairs or to policy makers. And certainly no need to make the results intelligible to all save a few colleagues.

Fortunately, Harvard economics professor Robert Barro is better than that. He starts *Determinants of Economic Growth*† with an important question, one posed over 200 years ago by Adam Smith: What determines the long-term economic growth rate, and therefore the prosperity of nations? He then proceeds to test a variety of theories, using such data bases as exist for over 100 countries, always carefully explaining their weaknesses and devising alternative tests of conclusions reached on the basis of those data that are particularly imperfect. Above all, he manages to include sufficient statistical and technical detail to satisfy the professionally trained while, at the same time, setting forth his major findings in prose accessible to the interested layman.

The three parts of this slim volume follow the format of Barro's 1995-1996 Lionel Robbins Memorial Lectures at the London School of Economics. The first chapter tests various theories of economic growth to find what corporate gurus now like to call "the drivers"; the second details the interplay be-

† The MIT Press. 145 pp. $35.00.

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tween economic development and democracy; the final chapter explores the relationship between inflation and monetary policy on the one hand and economic growth on the other.

SOME of Barro's findings are unsurprising: The number of years of secondary and higher-level schooling of males aged 25 and over has a significant positive effect on growth rates, supporting theories that stress the importance of education to an economy's ability to absorb new technologies. But some are surprising indeed: Data for 114 countries "do not support the hypothesis that education of women is a key to economic growth," either directly or through its effect on fertility rates.

Barro's regression equations also turn up proofs of beliefs long intuited by conservatives. It seems that the higher the ratio of government consumption (excluding expenditures on education and defense) to a nation's gross domestic product, the lower will be its rate of growth. As Barro puts it, "Big government is bad for growth." But the rule of law, as measured by such factors as the risk of government expropriation, the sanctity of contracts, and the security of property rights, has a significant positive effect on growth: "Greater maintenance of the rule of law is favorable to growth."

Barro then adds a bit of dash to this analysis. Of the 86 countries for which there are adequate data, he predicts which are likely to grow fastest, and which slowest, between 1996 and 2000. The average forecast growth rate for all 86 countries is 2.4 percent per year; the five likely to grow fastest—because of their combination of human capital, education, low government spending, robust rule of law, and other key variables—are South Korea, Philippines, Dominican Republic, India, and Poland; the laggards, all expected to exhibit negative growth, are Sierra Leone, Sudan, Malawi, Bangladesh, Niger, and Zaire. The United States is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 1.4 percent, well below Asia (3.7 percent) and Latin America (2.9 percent).

Barro may be too pessimistic in respect to America. He argues that our institutions and policies "are already reasonably good (despite possible excesses of transfer programs and regulations)," making it unlikely that changes in those institutions and policies can raise our growth rate much above 2 percent. Anything higher "seems to be incompatible with the prosperity that has already been attained." America's new triumphalists are as wrong in predicting continued, uninterrupted economic growth as the declinists were a few years ago

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in forecasting an America doomed to steady decline. But it does seem that efficiencies forced on industry—by Michael Milken and his so-called army of predators, by globalization of labor and product markets, and by deregulation of transport, financial services, telecoms, natural gas, and (soon) electricity—are permitting us to grow more rapidly, without triggering inflation, than we once could. Perhaps when Barro revisits these lectures, he will take a happier view of the effects of deregulation on efficiency and of our new-found ability to cope with the excesses of income-transfer programs. Perhaps he will even raise his projection of U.S. growth a notch or two.

EVEN more interesting, at least to political scientists, is Barro's exploration of the interplay between economic freedom and political development. Milton Friedman, of course, has argued that democracy and economic freedom are reinforcing: More political rights (democracy) fosters more economic rights, which in turn accelerates economic growth. Barro is not so sure.

For one thing, democracy can lead to growth-retarding "rich-to-poor redistributions of income." For another, non-democratic governments can maintain economic freedom and private property (if true, good news for Hong Kong): "A dictator does not have to engage in central planning." Of course, many use their positions "to steal the nation's wealth and to carry out nonproductive investments." Contrast Chile, where General Pinochet kept tight control of the political system while allowing free markets to develop, with many of the African kleptocracies, where theft and misguided central planning have brought once-prosperous colonies to economic ruin.

The cross-country data reveal a complicated picture. Increases in a nation's standard of living tend to generate a gradual rise in democracy, the latter measured by such admittedly difficult-to-quantify factors as the right to vote, demonstrate, and travel, and the extent of freedom of religion and education. But it is impossible to conclude from the data that more democracy is a critical element for economic growth. In short, economic growth may produce democracy, but it doesn't seem to work the other way around. Especially is this so in democracies created by the wave of a wand, perhaps by a departing colonial power or some well-meaning international agency: They do not last in the absence of prior economic development (witness the failed attempts at "nation-building" in many African countries). As Barro puts it, "The regression

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analysis predicts that, as with the African experience of the 1960s, democracy that gets well ahead of economic development will not last."

Equally significant, Barro suggests that economic growth increases "at low levels of democracy," but the relationship between growth and democracy turns negative "once a moderate amount of political freedom has been attained." Barro hypothesizes that the introduction of moderate amounts of democracy limits government power, encouraging growth; subsequent doses of political freedom produce growth-reducing income-redistribution schemes. (Readers who find this conclusion unpalatable can pore over Barro's data and test the robustness of his statistical conclusions; he lays both out in sufficient detail to permit just such testing.)

One interesting sidelight emerges from Barro's equations. Using "ethnolinguistic fractionalization," a measure of linguistic and ethnic disparity within a nation, Barro tested the hypothesis that greater heterogeneity makes it difficult to sustain democracy. It doesn't.

FINALLY, Barro explores the relationship between inflation and growth, using data from some 120 countries. Tight-money advocates will be mildly disappointed at the findings. First, although inflation does affect growth rates, it does so only to a limited extent. A 10 percent increase in the average inflation rate is estimated to lower the growth rate of real per capita GDP by only 0.3 to 0.4 percentage points per year. Barro is quick to point out that 0.3 to 0.4 percentage points per year means that the level of real GDP would be lowered by 6 percent to 9 percent over a 30-year period, equal to $480 to $720 billion in the United States, "enough to justify a keen interest in price stability."

Second, it seems that only very high inflation rates affect the rate of economic growth. For annual inflation rates below 20 percent, the relation between growth and inflation is not statistically significant, a conclusion softened only by the later finding that "the data would not reject the hypothesis that the relation between growth and inflation is negative at low rates of inflation." Third, and more reassuring, is the finding that there is no sign of a positive relationship between inflation and growth.

The reader comes away with the impression that Barro wishes he had found that even low rates of inflation have a major negative effect on growth rates. The fact that he didn't

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torture the data until they told him what he wanted to hear is perhaps the best tribute to his attempt to apply empirical methods to vast bodies of often imperfect data to answer a very important question.

Final judgment, of course, must await the response of scholars who will put Barro's data through their own computers, applying their own statistical methods. But, unlike such brilliant writers and unbrilliant economists as J. K. Galbraith and Robert Reich, Barro's critics will be operating within parameters set by hard facts and real data. For that advance, all policy makers will be in Professor Barro's debt.

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The 20 percent philosophy

FAREED ZAKARIA

MOST libertarians don't like their name. "It's a clunky neologism with too many syllables," admits David Boaz of the libertarian Cato Institute. Charles Murray agrees. It's "etymologically" imperfect, he says in his new book on the subject. And yet, the word and the movement persist, indeed flourish. From modest beginnings in the 1950s when a few free-market intellectuals began calling themselves libertarians, it has grown into a movement with a party, a presidential candidate, self-professed columnists, the now-requisite Hollywood stars (Kurt Russell), and—most important for any serious political philosophy today—a think tank in Washington, D.C.

What bothers libertarians about their name is the suspicion that people see them as oddballs. Even conservatives, so often in agreement with them on specific policy issues, often speak of libertarians as nice people who are intellectually refreshing and logically consistent, but naive in holding unrealistic views. ("They can't really believe all those things in this day and age can they? Privatize the highways; abolish all regulations. Really!") The neologism adds to this image of a quirky cult rather than a serious philosophy. ("Bob is a libertarian, John a vegetarian, and Mary a Sagitarian.") This is the libertarian predicament.

But first, what is libertarianism? In his elegant and well-wrought book, *What It Means to Be a Libertarian*,† Murray argues for a philosophy of individual liberty that allows the government the use of its coercive powers for a small set of specified purposes: to stop people from injuring one another; to allow for voluntary exchanges of goods and services; and to provide public goods (things people want in common, like running water, street lights, and roads). He then translates this minimal vision of government activity into specifics. There

† Broadway Books. 178 pp. $28.00.

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would be absolutely no government regulation of products and services, terms of employment (hours, wages, safety, etc.), or businesses, other than natural monopolies, like utilities companies. There would be no civil-rights laws, no agricultural subsidies, no Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. The departments of Housing, Energy, Agriculture, and many other government agencies, including NASA and the SEC, would all be disbanded.

The most striking aspect of Murray's case for tearing out the state from the economy root and branch is that many libertarians would regard it as wimpy, too soft in its acceptance of the state's role in society. He does, after all, defend the inter-state highway system and accept a federal role in education (dispensing vouchers), government standards for air and water quality, and the regulation of natural monopolies. He allows that government should provide public goods and flirts with, but eventually rejects, a negative income tax as a welfare measure for the poor. The end point of Murray's program is not to remove the state from almost all walks of life but to return it to the percentage share of GDP that it took in the early 1930s. For this heresy, Murray explains, he can only call himself a lower-case libertarian. Real Libertarians (capital L) are more pure and uncompromising.

THERE are three realities to which libertarianism is said to be blind. (The arguments I outline are ones made mainly, but not exclusively, by conservatives. I will not deal here with the left-wing case against libertarianism because, for the most part, it involves the tired old debate about the state's role in the economy, on which the Left has conceded so much ground that there is now little to debate.) First, modern nations and particularly their economies are highly complicated, sprawling entities requiring complicated governments; second, people have and require communal aspirations and ideals, making libertarianism's focus on individualism harmful; and finally, civic cultures are organic, traditional, and power-based entities, not simply rational ones bent on maximizing personal choice. In other words, societies are complex, collective, and conservative.

First, societies are indeed complex, and they have become even more complex during the great industrial and technological revolutions of the last three hundred years. But why does that mean governments must get larger with every new com-

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plication? The central insight of writers like Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek is that precisely because societies are highly complex, governments cannot organize or plan for them. It is the very complexity of society that argues for simplicity in government. If government were to try to mirror the variegated nature of the society it governs, it would do it very badly; think of the tax code. And since we can be sure that the economy and society of the twenty-first century will be more complex than that of the twentieth, those who make the "complex world-complex government" argument must be reconciled to an ever-expanding government.

And yet, libertarians are being unrealistic when they speak of a government that can govern such a complex society and yet be utterly minimalist. Surely it is naive to advocate zero regulations. Indeed, there is a contradiction within their own writings on this matter. Consider Murray: When trying to convince the reader that he is not an extremist, he explains that the world he envisions is basically America in the early 1960s, before the consumer-safety revolution, the Great Society's welfare programs, and the explosion of state spending and regulation. Yet America in 1960 had a considerably larger and more intrusive government than would exist if Murray's proposals were seriously enacted. There was *some* regulation of business and its products; many of the agencies of government to be shut down under Murray's plan existed in the 1950s.

Government flourished in Murray's "happy days" because even having a few regulations requires application and supervision. Property rights have to be enforced, and, as the economy becomes more complex, government must adapt. In a world of derivatives, software, and satellites, defining property, enforcing patents, and monitoring monopolies has become a complicated business that requires more than a few clerks. After all, even the private sector has gotten bigger and more complex with time; Microsoft probably has a gargantuan bureaucracy compared with the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

To replace product regulation and the current mass of federal regulation, Murray provides a five-point code of common law as a recourse against negligence and defective products. But to enforce those simple rules in a million different scenarios requires government. Someone has to define the terms sprinkled through Murray's Laws, like "clear information," "normal use," "reasonable care," "ordinary standards of business practice." His system seems to shift these powers from legisla-

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tures and regulators to judges and juries, but either way government is still present. And is the American system, where business is regulated through continual and ruinous litigation, any better for liberty?

LIBERTARIANS often forget that human beings have collective, as well as individual, identities; that their lives are not simply exercises in autonomy but also in collectivity. Libertarians forget this, but Charles Murray does not. He tries, with intelligence and success, to demonstrate the connection between individualism and community, which can be found, ironically, in a famous phrase of Edmund Burke's. A soldier dies, Burke once explained, not for King or country but for the men in his platoon. These little platoons are, for Murray, the answer to the tension between individualism and community—being voluntary, private, and small. Indeed, at the heart of America's rich tradition of "intermediate institutions"—rotary clubs, bowling leagues, etc.—was unfettered freedom of association. As that right has been curtailed is it any wonder that fewer such groups spring up spontaneously?

But the human quest for group identity and collective expression cannot be found solely in platoons, poker clubs, and bowling leagues. We also want the larger community—our nation—to express certain ideals. Classical liberals and libertarians make an important and troubling case that this search for public morality, for "positive liberty," has often led to bigotry or tyranny. But the same, long (often sad) record of history suggests that this search is part of the human condition. Even America—the most individualistic and libertarian nation in the world—has always worried about its national character. From the Mayflower Compact to the Civil War to anti-communism at home to the civil-rights movement, much of American history is about the desire to better our public morals. When Jefferson famously argued against the industrialization of America—"let our workshops remain in Europe"—he was worrying about its effect on republican virtue. "The [economic] loss," he explained, "will be made up in the happiness and permanence of government." If the desire for a national identity is natural, better to tame and shape it than outlaw it. Rather than opposing a priori, every expression of morality in public life, surely the libertarian case is better served by a practical engagement with specific issues, arguing for or against them on the basis of their specific effects on liberty, justice, community, and civic life.

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Finally, and perhaps most importantly, libertarians ignore the importance of power in life. They speak, for example, of the importance of community and tradition. But what if that community, bound together by coercion and tradition, is created by an irrational respect for authority? Alan Ehrenhalt, in his account of Chicago in the 1950s, persuasively shows that the well-knit neighborhoods of that golden age were the product of poverty, fear, explicit coercion, and peer pressure. The trouble for libertarians like Murray is that they want communities of free thinkers; but the two things do not go together. People say that they like community and tradition; until they have enough money to leave their lower-middle-class ghetto and until their priest refuses to condone their divorce. Autonomous, acquisitive, mobile beings—the kind libertarianism rightly celebrates—move often, associate only with people they like, and subject traditions to rational analysis. This is not a recipe for stable communities.

BUT all these problems cannot explain the libertarian predicament. While it has its weaknesses, they are matched, and perhaps outweighed, by its formidable strengths—a disciplined focus on liberty and the individual. More interesting than the substance of libertarianism is its image. It is seen not so much as wrong as weird. To speak about it conjures up the idea of a small group of college students, convinced that they are right but the world is wrong. And, as I say, the word libertarianism makes the matter all the worse.

The "normal" word that many libertarians wish they could use is liberal, by which, they hasten to add, they mean classical liberal in the tradition of Adam Smith, Richard Cobden and maybe John Stuart Mill. But, as Murray says, "Words mean what people think they mean, and in the United States the unmodified term liberal now refers to the politics of an expansive government and the welfare state." Libertarianism, we are thus told, is the resurrection of the classical liberal tradition, repackaged with a new name; aged claret in a sparkling new bottle.

But is it? Comparing libertarianism to classical liberalism is an interesting exercise, shedding light on both sets of ideas and on the libertarian predicament. The reason that libertarians seem extreme and odd is not that they are a furious minority, angry at a world that seems to have passed them by, but rather the opposite. They are heirs to a tradition that has

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changed the world. Consider what classical liberalism stood for in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was against the power of the church and for the power of the market; it was against the privileges of kings and aristocracies and for dignity of the middle class; it was against a society dominated by status and land and in favor of one based on markets and merit; it was opposed to religion and custom and in favor of science and secularism; it was for national self-determination and against empires; it was for freedom of speech and against censorship; it was for free trade and against mercantilism. Above all, it was for the rights of the individual and against the power of the church and the state.

CLASSICAL liberalism, we are told, has passed from the scene. If so, its epitaph will read as does Sir Christopher Wren's, engraved on his tombstone at St. Paul's Cathedral: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice." If you are searching for a monument, look around. Consider the world we live in—secular, scientific, democratic, middle class. Whether you like it or not, it is a world made by liberalism. Over the last two hundred years, liberalism (with its powerful ally capitalism) has destroyed an order that had dominated human society for two millennia—that of authority, religion, custom, land, and kings. From its birthplace in Europe, liberalism spread to the United States and is now busily remaking most of Asia.

The product of such total victory, however, is to leave the victors baffled. If all the world moves in your direction, what then can you stand for? Well, it turns out that the middle-class, secular, industrial states of the West have expanded government too much over the last 30 years. Government's share of GDP should be smaller. That's it. That simple, accurate observation has been turned into a complete political philosophy.

The reason that libertarianism seems narrow and naive is that having won 80 percent of the struggles it has fought over the last two centuries, it is now forced to define itself wholly in terms of the last 20 percent. Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice if you were in Prussia in the 1850s, but in America in the 1960s? Libertarianism has become extreme because the world has left it no recourse. Having beaten them, you can't join them.

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Dulce et decorum est....

DAVID BROOKS

On the second day of the battle of Gettysburg, three Confederate brigades launched an attack on a gap in the Union line on Cemetary Ridge. Union General Winfield Scott Hancock rode up to the spot and saw to his horror that the Southern soldiers would be able to pour right through and flood into the Union rear. He called upon the only Northern regiment at hand, the First Minnesota, to fill the soft spot in the line and hold off the enemy troops until more substantial reinforcements could be put in place. Hancock shouted over to the Minnesota commander William Colvill, and motioned to the Alabama flag advancing at the head of the Confederate force, "Colonel, do you see those colors? Take them."

Colvill had only 262 men at his command, but he and his men hurled themselves, bayonets fixed, into the center of 1,600 Alabamians. The Minnesotans did manage to delay the Confederate advance for a full 10 minutes, enough time for the reinforcements, but of the 262 who charged down that hill, only 41 men returned unharmed, a phenomenal casualty rate. Colvill was killed, along with all but three of his officers. It was a truly heroic charge, and to a man they must have known they were charging to their doom. So why were they so willing to sacrifice themselves?

These days we flatter ourselves as realists about such questions. We pooh-pooh Fourth of July rhetoric about duty to country, self-sacrifice in the name of freedom, and commitment to American ideals. Writers like Ernest Hemingway, and the experiences of World War I and Vietnam more generally, have taught us to regard words like "honor" and "duty" as hollow, used by old men to manipulate young men into fighting against their own true interests. In our day, as a number of writers have noted, the low is taken to be more real than the noble. So when asked to explain self-sacrifice, scholars tend to talk about the temporary passions of battle. Heroes, current

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theorists stress, are motivated by group cohesion—loyalty to one's buddies rather than to airy-fairy ideals. Most soldiers, the post-Vietnam thinking goes, try to keep their heads down, do their time, and go home safely.

But maybe we're too "realistic"—too gimlet-eyed in our estimations. Perhaps it's only pseudo-sophistication that leads us to see through the official rhetoric of sappy Memorial Day services. Perhaps there's more realism in the July Fourth invocations than in the hard-headed research of the historians.

JAMES McPherson, the George Henry Davis Professor of American history at Princeton, whose *Battle Cry of Freedom* is widely regarded as the best one-volume history of the Civil War, has conducted a study of the letters and diaries of 1,076 Civil War soldiers, 647 from the North and 429 from the South (overall, 29 percent of Civil War soldiers were Confederates). And, in *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*,† he describes the attitudes of the soldiers before, during, and after combat.

In the letters, he finds plenty of evidence to support our realist answers to the mystery of why men fight. Men were indeed motivated by loyalty to their fellow soldiers, and by a fear of public humiliation. But McPherson also finds much evidence of motivations that are nobler than the ones that get emphasized by skeptical realists.

In the first place, the letters suggest that both armies were acutely aware of the broader ideological implications of the war. Here McPherson is bucking the conventional wisdom among his colleagues. "American soldiers of the 1860s appear to have been about as little concerned with ideological issues as were those of the 1940s," wrote Bell Irwin Wiley, an influential historian of the Civil War. But McPherson finds that "ideological motifs almost leap from many pages" of the letters. Newspapers were much sought after items in camp. We "make comments on the news and express our opinions quite freely about the blood and thunder editorials in the Richmond papers, smoke again and go to bed," a Virginia lieutenant wrote in a typical letter home. The diary entries from an Ohio Cavalryman convey the political atmosphere in the longueurs between fighting. From September 12, 1864: "Politics is the principal topic of the day." September 13: "Spend a good

† Oxford University Press. 237 pp. $25.00.

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portion of my time reading the news and arguing politics." September 21: "Politics keep up quite an excitement in our company." Several regiments set up debating societies, where they argued over such issues as, should the leaders of the opposing armies be executed after the war, or "Do the signs of the times indicate a downfall of our Republic?"

More importantly, the soldiers constantly appealed to abstract principles to explain why they were fighting, why they refused to desert, and why they reenlisted. A sergeant from Georgia wrote to his family, "If my heart ever sincerely desired any thing on earth ... it certainly is to be useful to my Country.... I will sacrifice my life upon the alter of my country." At Gettysburg he did.

If anything, the Union soldiers were even more committed to abstract principles like national ideals, because they were not fighting so clearly to preserve local institutions (like slavery) or to avenge invaders on their homeland. A veteran from New Jersey wrote to his brother and sister in 1863: "Though my prayer is for peace, 'tis for an honorable peace. I would rather live a soldier for life [and] see this country made a mighty sepulcher in which should be buried our institutions, our nationality, our flag and every American that today lives, than that our Republic should be divided into little *nothings* by an inglorious and shameful peace."

Union soldiers felt that democracy was at stake and that European monarchs and other enemies of democracy would take comfort from their defeat. A Kansas lieutenant who had been held for a year as a prisoner at Chickamauga wrote to his fiancé that if the Union was to lose "the hope of the freedom of nations and Millions in Europe and elsewhere [will be] ... obscured for ages." "If I do get hurt," a 40-year-old corporal from Ohio wrote to his wife after reenlisting in 1864, "I want you to remember that it will be not only for my Country and my Children but for Liberty all over the World that I risked my life, for if Liberty should be crushed here, what hope would there be for the cause of Human Progress anywhere else." He too was killed, four months later near Atlanta.

ONE of our most influential literary critics, Paul Fussell, has made a career arguing that all warfare is an absurd and ugly chaos, and that noble civilian sentiments about conduct in war are lies. Perhaps that applies to Fussell's war, World War II, though one doubts it. It certainly does not apply to the experiences described in these letters.

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The correspondents are not gilding the lily in these letters. Early in the war, the soldiers say they are looking forward to "seeing the elephant"—the term they used for experiencing combat. But they were quickly disabused of romantic notions about what it is like to be under fire. They described the fear they felt before battle and many of the symptoms—complete exhaustion after battle, nightmares, insanity—that we now associate with the stress of warfare. And like all soldiers, they spent much of their time whining, cursing their superiors, and berating their president.

Yet the reenlistment rates were high. One gets the impression from McPherson's book that many wives and mothers were pleading with their men to come home, even to desert. In the North, some wives faced illness and poverty; in the South, soldiers learned that Union troops were ransacking their homes. The men tended to reenlist in part out of group loyalty but also out of more abstract callings, a sense of duty and manly honor. A veteran from Iowa wrote that he was "heartilly sick of War & Battles and I look forward to the time with longing when peace will once more be restored." But, as long as the war continued, "I do not wish to be elsewhere than here for it is for My Countries Flag that I am fighting."

During the war, the conventional wisdom was that, in any battle, half the men in each regiment fought aggressively while the other half hung back or straggled. And, in the bloody year of 1864, the soldiers had special cause for disillusionment—the body counts were up, the war was dragging on, and many soldiers had to decide whether to reenlist. But McPherson reports that morale tended to be higher at moments like this, when the fighting was at its bloodiest. "There is nothing pleasant" about soldiering, an Ohio corporal wrote in that year, "but I can endure its privations ... for there is a *big idea* which is at stake ... the principles of Liberty, Justice and of the Righteousness which exalteth a nation." Finally, a New Jersey sergeant wrote that neither the "horrors of the battlefield [nor] the blind acts of unqualified generals" had "chilled my patriotism in the least.... We are still engaged in the same holy cause. We have yet the same Country to fight for."

McPherson is continually rebutting the more cynical theories of his colleagues. S. L. A. Marshall theorized, evidently without much evidence, that only one in four soldiers actually fire their weapon in any given action. McPherson says that was not true in the Civil War. Other analysts have theorized that

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soldiers peak after four or five battles, after which they feel they have done their bit and simply want to avoid dangerous duty. McPherson describes Civil War soldiers who fought well again and again. And they did so with relatively little alcohol, or, on the contrary, often moved by one of the religious revivals that swept through both armies.

MCPHERSON has a light touch, and does not draw any heavy comparisons between the suffering populations of that day and the comfortable population of our own. At one point he says we justly mock words like "honor, courage, sacrifice and valor." Yet one senses here and there in this book that McPherson is gnawed by suspicions that something noble was lost when the ethos that sustained Civil War soldiers disappeared from American life:

> Our cynicism about the genuineness of such [Civil War era sentiments] is more our problem than theirs, a temporal/cultural barrier we must transcend if we are to understand why they fought. Theirs was an age of romanticism in literature, music, art and philosophy. It was a sentimental age when strong men were not afraid to cry.... What seems like bathos or platitudes to us were real pathos and convictions to them.... They were not posturing for public show. They were not looking back from years later through a haze of memory and myth about the Civil War. They were writing during the immediacy of their experiences to explain and justify their beliefs to family members and friends who shared—or in some cases questioned—those beliefs. And how smugly can we sneer at their expressions of a willingness to die for those beliefs when we know that they did precisely that?

It's impossible to know how today's Americans would conduct themselves if confronted by a challenge of the scope of the Civil War. But we certainly can marvel at the way American nationalism filled the consciousness of these young men. Today, we often silently attach the word "fanatic" to the word nationalism, especially when soldiers are fighting each other and dying. But, in the letters of the Civil War soldiers, we see an American nationalism that was not fanatical. It was meaningful and was nourished by the political culture. Today's soldiers probably, deep in their bones, feel a love of country that is as strong as the love those Civil War soldiers felt, but our soldiers do not live in a culture that helps them unabashedly and subtly express their sense of an American national destiny. Even our politicians seem incapable of that.

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The rights stuff

WILLIAM A. GALSTON

IN *From Parchment to Power*,† the eminent constitutional scholar Robert Goldwin has given us the first full narrative of the creation and adoption of the Bill of Rights. I take Goldwin's full subject to be not only this specific historical episode (as obviously important as it is) but also the nature of statesmanship in a democracy—the artful conjoining of political wisdom and popular consent. "Lesser democratic politicians," Goldwin observes, "try to satisfy public opinion by following the lead of the crowd, seeking out and doing whatever is calculated to be popular." Madison's statesmanship consisted, in part, in the ability to discern the difference between what the public was demanding and what it could be persuaded to accept. What could be of more relevance to our current poll-obsessed politics, in which abject, misguided fear of the people induces our politicians to avoid issues of great moment for our future?

Madison understood not only the relation between the people and their leaders but also the distinction between majoritarian victory and true consent on the most fundamental questions. Skirting outright rejection, the Constitution was ratified by a slender majority in the three largest states. While no state attached formal conditions as the price of ratification, many had drafted extensive lists of amendments (some 200 in all), and some had gone so far as to call for a second constitutional convention. John Hancock's Massachusetts formula—that his state would accede to the draft constitution "in full confidence" that amendments would be adopted by the new Congress—expressed the understanding of the key swing voters of the day, the moderate opponents of what had been wrought in Philadelphia.

† A.E.I. Press. 256 pp. $24.95.

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The immediate difficulty was that the First Congress contained an overwhelming majority of Federalists. Their view was that they had bested their adversaries and stood under no obligation to compromise with them on any matter of significance, including amendments. Moreover, they argued, wasn't it most important to get the machinery of the new government up and running? Wouldn't taking time to draft and debate amendments be diversionary? Wasn't it wiser to wait to determine through experience how the new institutions were working rather than rushing to alter them before the ink was dry on the Constitution? Besides, hadn't the issue been hashed out at Philadelphia and again during the ratification debate? Federalists had objected to a bill of rights on the grounds that it was unnecessary (the Constitution was itself a bill of rights, said Hamilton), that it was inappropriate to republican government, and that it would be ineffective—a mere paper barrier to usurpations not otherwise prevented. Plausible arguments all. Indeed, Madison himself had articulated many of them in 1787. By 1789, however, he was virtually alone among the Federalist members of Congress in taking a different view.

As Goldwin tells the story, Madison understood that great changes are not made on the basis of slender majorities, that the ratification struggle was enough to adopt the Constitution but not to establish it, that it was essential to keep faith with those who had stifled their doubts about the Philadelphia constitution on the basis of a promise to revise it. Unlike the rest of his Federalist brethren, Madison believed that the constitutional phase of the Founding was not yet complete. To be secured, the Constitution would have to move beyond its initial status as the victorious emblem of a majority faction to become the charter of "We the People" as a whole.

But was this possible? Hadn't the depth and bitterness of the ratification struggle revealed an unbridgeable chasm between the victors and the vanquished? Madison believed otherwise: The most relevant division was not between Federalists and Antifederalists but between the leaders of the Antifederalist cause and their supporters. Many notables were concerned about the diminution of their state-based political powers under the new Constitution. By contrast, the people cared most about possible threats to individual liberty. It was Madison's object to marginalize the former by addressing the concerns of the latter.

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The actions of the Antifederalists during the ratification debate provided an entering wedge for this strategy. Many states had divided their proposed amendments into two lists, one dealing with protections for personal rights and the other with alterations in political institutions. To the dismay of the Antifederalists in the First Congress, Madison drew his draft amendments almost exclusively from the first category. As Goldwin puts it (citing the late and much-lamented Herbert Storing), what Madison kept out of the Bill of Rights was as important as what he put in. Through the tortuous legislative process of 1789, this basic choice was never seriously challenged. Even a more explicit division of powers between the national and state governments (in what eventually became the 10th Amendment) was diluted by the repeated exclusion of the word "expressly," permitting an expansive reading of the necessary and proper clause.

On the political level, Madison's strategy proved remarkably successful. As early as the summer of 1789, there were reports that Madison's advocacy of amendments for individual rights only, though scornfully dismissed by Antifederalist leaders, was being favorably received by the people. And after the Congress had settled on the text, the proposed amendments were ratified by the state legislatures with remarkable ease. As for the substance of Madison's strategy, Goldwin offers a number of instructive insights. Madison early on concluded that, at the very least, a bill of rights would fulfill the political version of the Hippocratic oath and do no harm. There might well be something to gain from properly drafted amendments to the Constitution; there was nothing to lose. For Madison, rights were issues of power, not just abstract moral precepts. Thus the negative imperative form of Madison's proposals: Rights were to be secured not by declaring them but by restricting the national government's ability to violate them.

GOLDWIN concisely traces the congressional effort to draft satisfactory language dealing with religion. The final version, he suggests, represents an effort to meet three imperatives: ensuring that the national government could express no preference among religions; preventing the new government from interfering with existing state establishments; and maintaining its openness to the nondiscriminatory encouragement of religion in general. (In line with a number of other scholars, Goldwin adduces the roughly contemporaneous reenact-

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ment of the Northwest Ordinance as evidence that the religion clauses were intended to permit nonpreferential support of religious activities; though he acknowledges that this has been "the subject of much dispute ever since.")

In a revealing section of the book entitled "What the Antifederalists were For" (another bow toward Herbert Storing), Goldwin analyzes the kinds of amendments the foes of the Constitution really wanted: one-year terms for senators; the outright elimination of national oversight of state election laws; a ban on direct taxation; and the clear subordination of the president to Congress in foreign and defense matters, among others. Given the composition of the First Congress, these structural amendments stood no chance whatever. But, as Goldwin observes, the Antifederalists defined many of the great and persisting issues of American politics; they may have been defeated, but they "never quit the field."

Goldwin's narrative challenges us to ponder anew the relation between political institutions and political culture. On the one hand, the ratification process showed that the Constitution did not create, but rather built upon, democratic habits such as debate, coalition building, and the peaceful transfer of power. The defeated Antifederalists proved remarkably willing to work within constitutional processes. And Goldwin reads the Bill of Rights as a portrait of the American people whose evocative power reflects its verisimilitude. On the other hand, he emphasizes the Constitution's dynamic as well as static dimension: It not only reflects but also helps form the people.

It was on this ground that Madison ultimately persuaded himself that the Bill of Rights would go beyond the mere avoidance of harm to promote the long-term public good. In a letter to Jefferson, Madison posed the question, "What use ... it may be asked can a bill of rights serve in popular Governments?" His answer: "The political truths declared in that solemn manner acquire by degrees the character of fundamental maxims of free government, and as they become incorporated with the national sentiment, counteract the impulses of interest and passion." We are not yet, and may never be, a people fully shaped by the Bill of Rights. But this is no cause for pessimism about the prospects of free government.

WHILE Robert Goldwin has given us a book to savor, I note in conclusion two modest, but not completely negligible, omissions from his historical account. First, Madison was not entirely alone among Federalists in supporting a bill

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of rights. He enjoyed the not inconsiderable advantage of moral support from President Washington, who used the occasion of his First Inaugural address to urge the consideration of amendments consistent with a "reverence for the characteristic rights of freemen, and a regard for the public harmony." Second, the Senate's changes in the House draft of the Bill of Rights went beyond what Goldwin characterizes as editorial improvements. Madison's contemporaries report his deep distress. According to Fisher Ames, "Mr. Madison, in particular, thinks that they have lost much of their sedative Virtue by the alteration." Paine Wingate reports, "As to amendments to the Constitution Madison says he had rather have none than those agreed to by the Senate." In this light, Madison must have seen the final changes wrought by the House/Senate conference committee (of which he was a member) as even more important than Goldwin suggests.

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Good parents not money

DOUGLAS J. BESHAROV & MARK H. LOPEZ

PARENTS matter. That's the message of Susan Mayer's new book, *What Money Can't Buy*.† The University of Chicago sociologist's sophisticated and often ingenious analyses lead her to conclude that parents' characteristics are more important than their income in determining how well they raise their children and, hence, how well their children will do in later life. Thus Mayer argues that giving low-income families more money would not help their children very much. Such conclusions are likely to infuriate liberals and receive an "I told you so" response from conservatives, but it's more complicated than that.

The children of low-income parents, as Mayer notes, are much less successful than those whose parents have more money. They score lower on measures of cognitive ability. They are more likely to drop out of school, to become unwed parents in their teen years, to have behavioral problems, and to earn less in later life. But why? The best way to find out would be to conduct a grand social experiment like the negative-income-tax experiments of the 1970s and early 1980s. Those randomized experiments, although still subject to academic debate, suggested that simply giving poor families more money would not solve their problems.

Mayer, of course, was unable to conduct such an experiment. Instead, she took advantage of the differences among families, as reflected in various national data sets to conduct a series of creative analyses that exploit natural variations in behavior. Here's what she found:

The parental characteristics that lead to higher earnings are associated with better child outcomes. Mayer performs two analyses to come to this conclusion. First, she finds that higher earned income is more correlated with good child outcomes

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than is unearned income, such as child support, alimony, or an inheritance. Since earned income is more reflective of personal competence than is unearned income, some of the same characteristics that lead people to earn more money also lead them to be better parents.

Second, Mayer finds that child outcomes are relatively independent of changes in parental income. Income received after specified child outcomes, such as dropping out of school, getting pregnant, performance on academic and behavioral tests, and single motherhood, is as associated with the outcome as is parental income received prior to the outcome. Thus, argues Mayer, those parental characteristics that lead to higher incomes also lead to better child outcomes.

Additional spending on immediate home environments does little to improve child outcomes. Mayer is also able to measure natural variations in parental spending on home environments, which she uses to gauge the impact of spending. Her three measures of parental spending on home environments are: household living conditions (the quality of the home and how much money is spent on food, health care, and rent), activities and possessions of children (number of books, percentage with a CD or tape player, number of trips to a museum, and number of annual outings), and household environment (cleanliness, safety, clutter, darkness, dreariness).

Mayer finds that the superiority of home environments of higher-income parents compared to those of lower-income parents is only weakly correlated with good child outcomes. Since, concludes Mayer, low-income parents can meet the basic needs of their children with the help of current government programs, "additional improvements in household living conditions do little to help children succeed."

Good child-rearing practices do not seem to depend on parental income. Rather, parental income itself is a reflection of those characteristics that make parents better earners and better parents. Mayer also assesses the correlation between parental income and specified parental behaviors that she found, in a separate analysis, to be important in explaining child outcomes. (They included disciplinary practices, nurturing practices, the amount of time parents watch TV and read to their children, and the number of times parents attend PTA meetings.) She estimates that doubling parents' income, apparently from $15,000 a year to $30,000 a year, would do little to change their behavior toward their children.

National trends in child outcomes do not parallel income

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trends. Mayer compares the income trends for all families and for families by income quintile with child-outcome trends, again for all families and by income quintile. She finds that, although income inequality has grown, with the incomes of top earners rising, and those of low earners stagnating, trends in child outcomes are mixed. Some outcomes (like high-school graduation and years of education) have improved while others (like teenage out-of-wedlock births and male idleness) have worsened. According to Mayer, "these results imply that neither the trends in the overall level of children's outcomes nor the trends in their distribution parallel trends in parental income." The absence of any consistent correlation between parental-income and child-outcome trends is, she believes, further evidence that the effect of additional income must be small.

Mayer concludes that "the parental characteristics that employers value and are willing to pay for, such as skills, diligence, honesty, good health, and reliability, also improve children's life chances, independent of their effect on parents' income." Moreover, "in most cases, additional parental income does not improve children's chances for success." Mayer then argues that, "once children's basic material needs are met," "the important question for policy makers is not how much is enough, but rather what is the right kind of help." And, in her view, that may mean "paternalistic" policies that tell or teach parents how to raise their children.

BUT are Mayer's findings convincing? The simple elegance of many of her analyses, coupled with the fact that they all point in the same direction, is persuasive. However, Mayer takes her findings both too far and not far enough.

First, no matter how carefully performed, Mayer's analyses are only as good as her data. For example: Her measure of material hardship and overall household living conditions is limited since parents spend their money on things other than rent, food, and health. Mayer only measures the impact of providing the basic necessities for children rather than the impact of additional, higher quality spending on educational toys or sophisticated equipment (such as a computer or a piano). It is not surprising, therefore, that such a spending measure reveals so little effect of additional spending. By definition, Mayer cannot measure the impact of higher quality resources.

There are some kinds of expenditures, like paying for pri-

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vate school or moving to a better neighborhood, that could make a real difference in child outcomes. At least that's what those middle-class parents whose characteristics and behavior Mayer cites with approval think. Would not wise policy therefore encourage (or subsidize) certain expenditures, such as education?

Second, Mayer paints with too broad a brush. She reports her results for all poor families; all poor families are not alike, however. It would be important to know whether additional income has as little impact on the child-rearing practices of various subpopulations as for the general population. But Mayer never presents results for racial and ethnic minorities, and we are left to wonder how important parental income might be for these particular groups. And for some parents (say newly divorced mothers or new immigrants), additional money might make a difference (especially if it were used for educational services). Ignoring those for whom more money might help is as bad as exaggerating the limited importance of more income.

Third, Mayer's approach is static in nature. Because she is performing cross-sectional analyses on parental characteristics at one point in time, she cannot predict the long-term consequences of giving parents more money. Perhaps many of the poor do not now have the qualities that either employers or children need. But it is possible that encouraging work, perhaps through wage subsidies, would over time inculcate the parenting skills that the more affluent have. The real questions would be how many might be helped, at what cost, and with what collateral negative consequences.

FINALLY, it seems to us that Mayer does not raise the key question: If giving the poor more money would not improve child outcomes very much, why wouldn't giving them less (through cutting welfare) foster the kind of paternalistic responses she all but endorses? Unfortunately, she does not even raise the possibility that welfare benefits are part of the reason America's poor parents are as inadequate as she finds them.

Exploring such questions would have made this slender volume much more interesting. But even if Mayer has not given us an intellectual feast, she has given us food for thought.

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Girls just wanna have fun

DIANA SCHAUB

SPEAKING of the burgeoning feminist movement, Henry James's tough-minded female doctor in *The Bostonians* (1886) says:

> "Well, what it amounts to is just that women want to have a better time. That's what it comes to in the end."
>
> "And don't you sympathize with such an aspiration?"
>
> "Well, I don't know as I cultivate the sentimental side," said Doctor Prance. "There's plenty of sympathy without mine. If they want to have a better time, I suppose it's natural; so do men too, I suppose. But I don't know as it appeals to me—to make sacrifices for it; it ain't such a wonderful time—the best you *can* have!"

In this posthumous collection of essays, *Women and the Common Life: Love, Marriage, and Feminism*,† Christopher Lasch explores the origins, permutations, and costs of the feminist quest for "a better time." Although most of these previously published essays date from the early 1990s, the theme engaged Lasch's attention from the 1960s forward. The very fine introduction by Lasch's daughter, Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, includes a letter in which her father spoke of his longstanding attempt "to trace the interconnections between the modern ideology of intimacy, the new domestic ideal of the nineteenth century, and feminism," a project he envisioned under the heading "The Domestication of Eros." The eventual title is perhaps to be preferred for the way it captures Lasch's concern for that threatened realm between the state and the individual—"the common life" increasingly overtaken by the expansion of artificially constructed public and private realms. Nonetheless, the original title better indicates Lasch's thesis about the direction of the last couple of centuries, during

† W. W. Norton & Company. 196 pp. $23.00.

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which love has settled down (not altogether happily) in marriage.

LASCH'S "domestication of eros" might also be called its democratization. Accordingly, like Tocqueville who always sketches democracy in light of the aristocratic alternative to democracy, Lasch begins by recovering the aristocratic conception of love and marriage, not as a live possibility, politically speaking, but rather as a crucial imaginative one if we hope to understand our own situation. Contemporary academic feminists, intent on finding patriarchal misogyny in the historical record and/or valiant (and precociously feminist) subversion of same, lack the freedom of imagination to see anything in the past other than a costume version of themselves and their "oppressors." Lasch's reading of the past is, by contrast, genuinely perceptive in that he discerns the different spirit of a different age.

We learn that both parties to the highly ritualized combat of the medieval *querelle des femmes* shared a common premise: "They took for granted the contradiction between love, which rested on sexual equality, and marriage, a hierarchical arrangement in which a wife was expected to submit to her husband's authority." According to Lasch, works from the *Roman de la Rose* (circa 1275) forward, which are often read as attacks on womankind, are better understood as diatribes against marriage. Moreover, the barbs directed at wives touch husbands as well:

> It is he [the jealous husband] who usually gives voice both to the stock criticism of marriage and to the stock vilification of women; and since he is himself an object of conventional satire, the satire against women also contained a satire against the male in his capacity as householder, husband, and cuckold. Far from giving vent to "antifeminist" prejudices, aristocratic satire rested on criticism of marriage and more specifically of jealousy, rightly believed to dominate relations not founded on the principle of voluntary, reciprocal submission.

On the other side of the *querelle*, Christine de Pisan, often hailed as the ur-feminist, turns out to have been an advocate of old-fashioned female honor, which is to say women's capacity for fidelity and "wifely submission." What is perhaps most notable about this centuries-long literary controversy is that neither the detractors nor the defenders of aristocratic marriage denied or sought to ameliorate the distance between love

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and marriage, between freedom and necessity. Instead, they met it with "tears and laughter," courtly poetry and comic satire.

ONLY in the eighteenth century did the playful aristocratic contest of wits give way to the earnest democratic science of reform. What was new about feminism was not its assessment of male tyranny (or male sexual inadequacy or male bellicosity or male unreliability). The complaints were age-old; the cure—indeed, the very notion of a cure—was what was new. According to Lasch, feminism begins with the attempt "to reconcile marriage with sexual equality" (and thus, love). But the idea that feats of social engineering are possible may be traced back much further to Descartes (who gave us the disembodied, which is to say ungendered, mind) and Hobbes (who gave us the unencumbered self, for whom "right is of no sex").

In fairness it should be pointed out—and Lasch's second essay (a review of Jean H. Hagstrum's *Esteem Enlivened by Desire*) does so—that there had long existed a "countertradition" of marital love (remember Penelope and Odysseus): "From the beginning, it would seem, the West was able to imagine that marriage might rest on sexual attraction and mutual respect, instead of on the sexual subordination that was taken as the norm elsewhere in the world." To turn that imagined ideal, that rarely experienced exception, into a new norm was a task the rising bourgeoisie saw as eminently reasonable and moral.

In chapter 3, Lasch traces the two-pronged attack that secured modern, middle-class marriage. We are all familiar with the advent of bridal consent and the rejection of the aristocratic practice of arranged marriages. Less known, however, is that this "romantic" reform was accompanied by the suppression of another practice, that of clandestine marriage (marriage without witnesses, without parental consent, without publication of banns). The target here was passion. Young people could not simply be left to their own devices. There was the danger of seduction by bawds and sharpers, and the danger of imprudent alliances based solely on sexual attraction. So, consent must be "informed" consent—consent qualified by a requirement for parental consent, by a rise in the marriageable age, and by a general deemphasis of the erotic dimension of marriage along with a new stress on the role of friendship and compatibility.

By contrast, the opponents of the Marriage Act of 1753,

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who vehemently defended early marriage and resisted the demand for public marriages, spoke for an older tradition that "conceived of love as a function of sexual attraction rather than a product of mature deliberation and long acquaintance." They argued that, particularly among the lower classes, passion must remain the catalyst of marriage. Moreover, they predicted that the attempt to delay and rationalize the process would lead not to sounder marriages but to a rise in illegitimacy and male irresponsibility (and indeed, the second half of the eighteenth century saw a sharp rise in illegitimacy). As a good historian, Lasch displays an admirable evenhandedness in sketching these debates; he thus counters our tendency to ascribe intellectual merit solely to the historical winners.

By the nineteenth century, the middle-class "cult of domesticity" had routed both the upper-class marriage of interest and the lower-class marriage of impulse. In chapter 4, Lasch proceeds to examine the relation between the newly dominant view and feminism. What he finds may come as a surprise: "Often misinterpreted in our own time as a reactionary ideology designed to keep women in the kitchen, the cult of domesticity generated feminist thinking among women who did not necessarily think of themselves as feminists." Meanwhile, self-proclaimed feminists, who began by denying the civic relevance of sexual difference, increasingly moved to accommodate their rhetoric to "the growing belief in women's moral superiority." (On the basis of Tocqueville's observation that Americans decidedly reject the unisex vision of equality, one might have predicted that equal-rights feminism would have to recast itself as female chauvinism in order to succeed.)

Lasch demonstrates the substantial agreement between feminists and antifeminists. They were at one "in condemning the doctrine that woman's highest aim was to please." Interestingly, their joint attack on the life of "fashion" was linked to the cause of abolition since slavery was held to exemplify patriarchy at its worst: male licentiousness (all those mulattoes) and female frivolity. Feminists and antifeminists alike called for women to be useful, not ornamental. Usefulness in turn entailed female education and serious work, not necessarily as wage earners but, rather, as full partners in the economy of the home and as stewards of civic culture and moral uplift. Although Lasch says that feminists and antifeminists were "bitterly divided about everything else," one wonders, from his presentation of the extensive convergences, what there was

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left to disagree about (other than female suffrage). What Lasch describes might simply be termed Yankee womanhood—Henry James implied as much when he titled his exploration of American sexual mores *The Bostonians*.

HAVING sketched the victory of bourgeois domesticity in Part I, Lasch next explores the fate of this new dispensation. It seems that the special competence of women did not last long. There were others with stronger claims to expertise and at least as great an interest in social control. According to Lasch, "the achievement of 'individualism' and 'autonomy' for middle-class women represented part of a larger social and political process that ended in the ascendancy of professional experts." The common life has been invaded and annexed, with the consequence that men and women alike now depend on "the assistance of specially trained professionals [social workers, psychiatrists, marriage counselors, guidance counselors, child development experts, et al.] for the conduct of everyday life."

This theme of the therapeutic state, which Lasch treats extensively in his other works, is here illustrated through the nineteenth-century alliance of women and doctors. Women readily turned to doctors for help in gaining control over such matters as the number of children borne and the frequency of intercourse, but Lasch suggests, in rather dark Foucaultian terms, that the doctors had an agenda of their own:

> Women's role as cultural missionaries, closely bound up with their domestic confinement but simultaneously serving to justify demands for wider social influence and participation in public life, was to some extent the deliberate creation of doctors seeking to make wives and mothers agents of medical influence—of the medical "colonization" of the family.

Perhaps that ignorant, recalcitrant peasant in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* had the right idea when he shut the door on the white coats who tried to institute "the pricking of the children" (a regular program of innoculations).

Although our version of social discipline never descended into a gulag, Lasch insists that "this new style of noncoercive, nonauthoritative, and manipulative control poses its own kind of danger to the democratic institutions it is intended to preserve." And it isn't only habits of democratic self-governance that are threatened. Eros is decisively displaced as well. Love is not just domesticated, it is scientifically scrutinized; it be-

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comes sex. Our much vaunted sexual liberation has in truth led to a "drastic shrinkage of our imaginative and emotional horizon."

LASCH is not a thinker who denies human agency in history; nonetheless, reading this book, one gets a sense of the inevitability of our current plight. Feminism itself seems swept up in larger forces. Capitalism and class loom particularly large and ugly for Lasch. "The feminist movement," he says, "far from civilizing corporate capitalism, has been corrupted by it." Dissatisfied (and rightly so) with suburban isolation, women unwisely threw themselves headlong into the market. For the last 30-some years, they have formulated feminist demands in an attempt to rig the competition in their favor: affirmative action, comparable worth, sexual-harassment policies, abortion rights, and state-run day care. But, according to Lasch, there is no "empowerment," no "choice," to be found in the realm of work, for either women or men, since labor has been stripped of meaning "by the requirements of the corporate economy." Lasch wishes for a genuinely radical feminism—a feminism that would "question the ideology of economic growth and productivity, together with the careerism it fosters"; a feminism that "would demand a system of production for use rather than profit"; a feminism that would reject "progress." To bring about a "family friendly workplace" the current strict separation between home and workplace must be overcome.

Although Lasch's own language is not Aristotelian, it does not seem amiss to say that Lasch wishes to reunite the two halves of the *oikos* (the Greek word for the household from which our word "economics" derives) and properly subordinate the acquisitive element to the higher purposes of family life, particularly the inculcation of virtue in the next generation. For Lasch, the *oikos* ought to direct its members beyond themselves and their narrow individuality toward the common life and democratic citizenship. Put most boldly, Lasch would like to undo modernity's elevation of economics over politics (and science over religion).

Interestingly, given what seems to be his criticism of modern premises, Lasch evinces considerably more sympathy for gender-neutral "equality" feminism than for "difference" feminism. A feminism that acknowledges natural differences might seem to entail less in the way of social engineering, but in

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fact, as Lasch shows in his demolition of Carol Gilligan, difference feminism in particular has become the agent of a destructive "feminization" of American life. By denigrating impersonal standards and notions of excellence as "male," difference feminism has furthered the democratic assault on such standards. Feminism has substituted an absolutely groundless "self-esteem" for the self-respect of men and women who hold themselves to "a demanding ideal of perfection." Lasch insists that this self-absorption hurts women.

> The demand for access to the great world of politics and learning derived its original force from the observation that narrow circumstances breed narrow minds. But when feminists began to argue for their rights on the grounds that it would give "maternal influence" a wider sphere, they sacrificed moral realism to political expediency. They turned conventional stereotypes to political advantage but lost the ability to explain what makes the world of women, unless it is integrated into a more impersonal world where the quality of ideas or workmanship counts for more than "relationships," so confining to the spirit, so productive of petty jealousies, so highly charged with envy and resentment.

What we desperately need is a feminism leavened by an honest and hearty dollop of misogyny.

CLEARLY, it will not be supplied by Naomi Wolf, whose new book, *Promiscuities: The Secret Struggle for Womanhood*,‡ shows her to be still in quest of "a better time." The book is an evocative recounting of the sexual coming of age of Wolf and her friends in the San Francisco of the 1960s and 1970s, interspersed with potted summaries of the sexual mores of other times and places. In "A Short History of the Slut," for instance, we move from "the Great Mother, with her divine sexuality," circa 20,000 B.C.E., to Nicole Brown Simpson, all in five pages. Much of the memoir portion of the book is actually quite frank about the costs of the sexual revolution. Wolf describes particularly well the various ways in which children were neglected, bereft, forgotten, or abandoned as adults increasingly put their own gratification foremost. Her comments about the effect of divorce on young girls are perceptive:

> Just when the girls needed their fathers to be around to admire their emerging sexual identity from a safe distance—to be the dependable male figures upon whom they could innocently prac-

‡ Random House. 286 pp. $24.00.

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> tice growing up—the fathers vanished.... To the female children on the block, then, there was a new kind of anxiety: How could one grow up to become, through sex, the kind of woman a dad would not want to go away from?... The fathers' departure created in many women my age a feeling of cynicism about the durability of the bonds of commitment and love and an almost blind religious faith in the strength of the bond of sex.

But Wolf wouldn't have had it otherwise: "In spite of all the wreckage, I am glad we lived through what we did, where we did." (This makes about as much sense as Wolf's position on abortion, which consists of a frank acknowledgement that abortion is murder coupled with an intransigent endorsement of the practice.) Wolf continues to believe that as a result of the sexual revolution female desire was "freed in some critical ways."

The problem, as she sees it, is that the revolution did not go far enough. Everybody learned the technical stuff about orgasms and g-spots, but did not really come to appreciate, nay "venerate," the distinctiveness of female desire. This is Wolf's answer to the pretty much undeniable fact that the sexual revolution's version of sexual equality unleashed male wolfishness. What we need according to her is to complete the sexual revolution by reviving "female sexuality's sacred and religious aspects." Thus will women affirm their superior and polymorphous carnality ("There are no good girls; we are all bad girls, in the best sense of the word"), and thus will men learn the delights of apprenticing themselves to such goddesses. Gallantry would return, not in the form of a man's throwing his coat over a mud puddle but in the form of hours of foreplay.

According to Wolf, history offers us plenty of examples of the enshrinement of female desire, from the Han Dynasty of ancient China and its Tao of Loving to the Zuni Indians of New Mexico. To her credit, Wolf is trying to rescue heterosexuality from "feminist commentators" who "equate heterosexuality with a set of assumptions that are innately degrading to women." In turning to the Kama Sutra and other erotic literature, she is looking for works that "give the lie to the message in *Penthouse*, the primary teaching text for the teenage boys we know, that female nakedness and sexuality are cheap, as well as those of some second-wave feminists whose wish to restrict images of female nudity is argued on the grounds that they are inherently 'objectifying.'"

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BUT one suspects that her eclecticism is a bit sloppy. Wolf wants more respect for women without any sacrifice of promiscuous pleasures. Yet, from her own brief accounts of these other cultures, one notices that these elaborate sex manuals were used as marriage manuals by "inexperienced brides." In other words, womanly pleasure meant wifely pleasure. That observation should at least cause one to wonder whether both maidenly virginity and matronly fidelity might be important components of teachings about the sacredness of female desire. But Wolf, no sexual economist, wants pleasure to be both precious and plentiful. Hence she prefers the Babylonians, with their ritual prostitution, to the Jews, who thought prostitution unholy. One can't help wondering what she'll find a good word for next: maybe the liberationist potential of polygamy.

Wolf doesn't go so far as to recommend ritual prostitution for us today, but she does want rituals: rites of passage for girls, "wisdom initiations," "mentoring exchanges," and all-female retreats at which "older women would teach the younger skills and techniques, such as self-defense, contraception, sexual pleasure, and parenting." Again, she seems unaware that the things she wants don't necessarily cohere. It is difficult to combine real rituals with radical freedom. Peoples with rituals that matter are bound. They don't, as Carol Gilligan's blurb says of *Promiscuities*, "encourage every woman to tell it her way."

It is exceedingly easy to mock this book, from its opening invocation of Margaret Mead to its closing call for a sort of updated version of the Eleusinian mysteries. Nonetheless, I do believe that the dissatisfaction fueling Wolf's inquiry is serious. To some extent, she overlaps Lasch, and even the late Allan Bloom, in her concern for the fate of eros in the modern world. Like them, she returns to the thought and practices of bygone times. In the end, however, San Francisco retains its hold on her. As she says early on, "our town made it hard to have ultimate faith in any belief system that made claims beyond the pleasures of the senses." But a true education of the sentiments is not to be had in the City of Sybaris.

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Triumph of the counterculture

DIANA WEST

NEWT Gingrich plays an odd role in *Reassessing the Sixties*,† a new collection of essays edited by Stephen Macedo presenting a mix of viewpoints on women, universities, and race. For his declaration of war—not just war, but revolution—against the sixties following the 1994 Republican congressional victory, the Speaker is invoked by essayists on the left and the right; his exhortations against the legacies of the sixties—most notably, his styling of Bill and Hillary Clinton as "countercultural McGoverniks"—recur throughout the book, usually cited as evidence of a juggernaut on the right. (One contributor not-so-elliptically connects Gingrich to the Oklahoma City bombing.)

Long since disembodied from both man and movement, such flush-of-victory rhetoric makes a curious political footnote. While the Speaker's rhetoric may still work the Left into push-button frenzies (even as disarray on the right calls his sense of mission and leadership into question), it is more memorable for an almost poignant naiveté. The battlefield of the so-called "culture wars" has never, despite clamor to the contrary, come to Capitol Hill. Nor can it. George Will pinpoints this seeming paradox in the book's foreword, noting that, while "the nation's political discourse may be driven by conservatives, politics seems peripheral to, and largely impotent against, cultural forces and institutions permeated with what conservatives consider the sixties sensibilities."

It is interesting that Will should choose to specify "conservatives" as being the ones so attuned, as though both the continuing existence and influence of such sensibilities were subjective matters. But maybe they are. (Actually, far from all conservatives appreciate the pervasiveness of sixties-ism. Even as astute an observer as Will himself, for example, once saw fit

† W. W. Norton & Co. 297 pp. $25.00.

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to pronounce the sixties "dead.") Where the book's conservative contributors critique the comprehensive cultural takeover the decade wrought, the inclination of the liberals (as defined by their defense of the decade's aims and innovations) is to lament what they take to be a legacy of political defeat or frustration, therewith failing to appreciate the magnitude and durability of their own glory-day efforts.

SHELDON Wolin, for example, a former Berkeley professor, recalls the decade as "myth manqué," or "an exhausted narrative ... fated to shuffle off into nostalgia" for having failed to transform the practice of democracy—as if the cultural revolution that took place weren't transforming enough. It is a shortsighted, or rather nearsighted, assessment. But such parochialism marks Wolin's essay. If tremulous prose is an indicator, Wolin's ideal governing body would seem to be Berkeley's Academic Senate, circa 1964: There, he writes, professors "fashioned themselves into an academic citizenry, at least for the moment.... From a sleepy, ill-attended assembly that took its marching orders from the administration, it became an independent, vibrant deliberative institution."

Having dismissed the "alleged destructiveness" of the sixties as "myth," Wolin offers highly selective accounts of Berkeley's activist heyday, regaling the reader with copious details of the procedural machinations of the Free Speech Movement, for example, while barely mentioning its tactics of disruption and disobedience. Also missing is any mention of what might possibly have caused then-Governor Ronald Reagan, in 1969, to order the National Guard onto the Berkeley campus. Wolin's approach seems to belie the maxim that actions speak louder than words. The fact is, however, few remember the numerous, essentially temporal, goals of the protesters; many remember what they did.

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., a professor of government at Harvard University, understands the distinction. Deep in his trenchant overview of the decade, a rat-a-tat tour de force of intellect and passion (the reader is forewarned "not to expect a nonjudgmental treatment framed in the weasel words of social science"), he succinctly expresses the decade's essence:

> The sixties' revolution was more a rebellion of children against parents than of citizens against the government. Its assertiveness was more in style than in substance, more longhair and working-class duds than a new form of government. The New Left, rejecting the establishment, did not have an alternative; it lacked the

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> organizational skills, the staying power, and the ruthlessness of the Old Left. It hoped to change politics by transforming culture rather than through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

And so it did. Presumably, the way back for Gingrich and anyone else so inclined lies not so much through the halls of Congress as through the miasmal cultural thickets—a most daunting quest.

JEREMY Rabkin, a professor of government at Cornell, offers a spirited and trenchant analysis of feminism's faulty origins—namely, the absurdity of treating privileged American women as an oppressed class—which Martha C. Nussbaum's essay, with its descriptions of pre-liberation female "miseries hidden behind 'immaculate lawns' and 'dresses from Bergdorf Goddman's,'" does more to confirm than disprove. Still clinging to the importance of "consciousness raising" as "a necessary precondition of any adequate realization of female liberty or equality," Nussbaum, a professor at the University of Chicago, is nonetheless critical of its results: namely, the sexual revolution, the rejection of family, even the exhausting careerism that comes with becoming one of the boys. Of course, no condemnation of the women's movement is forthcoming. Rather, she hopes to refocus the feminist agenda on parts of the world where, she notes, the spread of women's rights can be a matter of life or death—not, as in this country, merely "sexual pleasure" or "the right to a lesbian identity."

But where Rabkin condemns a movement "launched amid self-dramatizing narcissism," Nussbaum can only bring herself to criticize its "insularity." She writes: "To this extent sixties feminism was myopic, and it also led us to direct all our critical attention against a tradition—our own—that is in many important respects relatively benign to women, however much it deserves criticism in others." A neat back-handed compliment.

Walter Berns dominates the section on the universities with tales from his days as a professor at Cornell, a grotesque catalogue of horrors that help explain the demise of the modern academic enterprise. Berns makes a compelling case that the radicalization of the campus, from which it has never recovered, has its roots in the kind of affirmative-action policies first implemented in the early sixties by Cornell President James A. Perkins.

It happened this way: To fight university "racism," Perkins

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recruited black students, regardless of the fact that their test scores were substantially below par; such ill-equipped students, not illogically, wanted separate dorms[1] (Perkins acquiesced); they then demanded an autonomous, degree-granting college within Cornell for black studies (Perkins acquiesced); and finally, they launched an assault on university "racism." This became a quasi-military assault on the university itself, which the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) eagerly joined (again, Perkins acquiesced to all and sundry demands).

The era of multiculturalism, gutted academic standards, and political correctness thus began. "By surrendering to students armed with guns, [Perkins] made it easier for those who came after him to surrender to students armed only with epithets ('racists,' 'sexists,' 'elitists,' 'homophobes')."

AT this thought-provoking statement, a reader's thoughts may swivel leftward to seek a rejoinder, but to no avail. *Reassessing the Sixties* contains little in the way of direct dialogue or debate, which is one of the book's disappointments. For example, the book's concluding set of essays on race includes a dense and inconclusive chapter on black power by Randall Kennedy; a somewhat meandering chapter on integration by Anita LaFrance Allen; and a final selection from Cass R. Sunstein on the need to rethink racial problems as "caste" problems, which Sunstein himself describes as "shamelessly selective and impressionistic." No wonder book editor Stephen Macedo is moved, in his introduction, to note the race section's "striking ambivalence (which, admittedly some will regard as wishy-washiness)."

However, even when the essays of *Reassessing the Sixties* have clashing viewpoints, they strike no sparks. The only semblance of engagement comes in an afterword by Todd Gitlin, a sixties historian of the flame-keeping variety, who offers cursory responses to the trio of conservative critics. Gitlin, for example, disposes of Berns's provocative essay simply by wondering "how these [black] students would have gotten [to Cornell] without the messy and frequently deplorable student movement [Berns] deplores." The former SDS president either

[1] In passing, Berns makes the novel argument that disparate test scores may explain the extent to which higher-scoring white students and lower-scoring minority students fail to associate socially, a phenomenon usually attributed exclusively to racial differences.

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can't or won't ponder whether the contorted logic of affirmative action served either those students or their campuses well.

Preferring to write more generally about the radicalizing nature of the decade's "obsessive contentiousness," Gitlin trots out Bill Clinton. "In the not very gay nineties," Gitlin writes, "a president identified with [the sixties], whether he likes it or not, has had to devote considerable energy to wriggle away from the reputation." Perhaps Gitlin is referring to Clinton's sidestepping of such age-old transgressions as draft evasion, womanizing, and drug use. But to what extent has Clinton actually had to distance himself from the era of his youth?

Before formulating an answer, it's worth noting that the First Family recently celebrated daughter Chelsea's seventeenth birthday by stepping out to attend three of Broadway's most popular shows ("Chicago," "Rent," and "Bring in Da Funk, Bring in Da Noise"). In the course of their theatrical whirl, the Clintons contemplated same-sex kissing, heterosexual intercourse (simulated), dildos, masturbation, marijuana, and twin blasts of black racism and cultural separatism. Not only that, they were mooned. (According to the *Washington Post*, the mooning incident took place "at an angle to the president and his family that was as decorous as allowed by the act of pulling down one's pants.") That this juxtaposition of the presidency with so countercultural a cavalcade inspired no comment should lead us to reframe the question: Rather than wonder how far Bill Clinton has wriggled from the sixties, perhaps it is better to ask, where else could he possibly go?

GITLIN is quick to castigate conservative critics who "exaggerate the enemy's conquests" after "more than a quarter century of Republican ascendancy and an unprecedented rollback in the authority of the federal government." With so much "Republican ascendancy" going around, why is it that late-century life is so indelibly, so universally marked by a countercultural milieu? The answer has something to do with the fact that the force of the sixties' cultural revolution flows unchecked by any incremental efforts the Republican party might muster. Or as Gitlin, in a contradictory vein, puts it: "The truth is that everybody today, the right as much as the left, stands on the ground of the sixties."

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Ethnicity and power

MARK F. BERNSTEIN

"AN Anglo-Saxon," Mr. Dooley remarked almost a century ago, "is a German that's forgot who was his parents." Some 65 years later another Irishman, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, observed with Nathan Glazer in *Beyond the Melting Pot* that "except where color is involved ... the specifically national aspect of most ethnic groups rarely survives the third generation." Today, one suspects that, to the extent they are aware of their heritage at all, most Americans of German (or Irish) descent would regard themselves almost as Anglo Saxons, part of the old ethnic stock of this country.

Some of us, though, are more immigrant than others, and so the ethnic pot continues to boil. A century and a half ago, Germans battled what Protestant society called "Wild Irish" in the Bowery ("Wild Irish," Moynihan pointed out, like "Wild Indians"). In 1993, it was blacks torching Korean businesses in the Los Angeles riots.

The country's current ethnic portrait is presented in *The State Atlas of Political and Cultural Diversity*† by William Lilley III, Laurence DeFranco, and William M. Diefenderfer III. They are the principals of InContext, Inc., a Washington demographics and mapping firm, and this is a follow-up to their 1994 book, *The Almanac of State Legislatures*, which assembled computer-generated maps of all 6,700 state legislative districts in the country. The *Atlas* takes this data, compiles lists of the legislative districts with the largest concentrations of 15 ethnic and racial groups, and provides demographic information such as household income, the percentage attending college, and the percentage receiving Social Security. It is entertaining for those who enjoy playing with numbers, although the prospective reader should know that it is more a

† Congressional Quarterly. 298 pp. $180.00.

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resource tool than a treatise, consisting mainly of maps and tables, with two brief analytical sections at the beginning.

THE 15 groups included are African Americans; American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts; Asians and Pacific Islanders; Chinese; Japanese; Koreans; Mexicans; Puerto Ricans; Cubans; Hispanics; Germans; Irish; Italians; Poles; and Arabs. Old stock (English, Scotch Irish, and the like) were not included because the authors considered them too dispersed to count as a "group." The authors also left out groups deemed either too small or politically insignificant, like the French and Portuguese, as well as some larger, more influential groups, such as Greeks and Scandinavians.

The selection leads to problems. The categories used come from the Census Bureau, and so contain all the limitations of those numbers. The book does not, for example, contain information on the distribution of Jews, though that might reveal more about the current ethnic composition of the United States than, say, the distribution of Koreans or Arabs.

Ancestry figures also suffer from a self-selection problem. People write as few or as many ancestries on their census forms as they like. The authors used the category listed first as the person's principal ancestry, but the perils in doing so are obvious. A person whose background is Irish, Italian, and Polish may list Irish first because it comes first alphabetically, or because it is the first one he thought of, or because he filled in his census form on St. Patrick's Day. It does not necessarily mean that Irish was his primary ancestry. Furthermore, only selected households received the particular census form that contained the ancestry question.

Along with the problem of self-selection, these numbers are also afflicted by double counting. The book gives separate listings for Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and "Asians and Pacific Islanders," but the Asian/Pacific Islander category also includes Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans, who are thus listed twice. The same is true for Hispanics, who are included as a general category along with Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans.

Problems notwithstanding, one can readily see in these maps that ethnicity is primarily a regional phenomenon. Not a single one of the top 500 German legislative districts, for instance, is located within the old Confederacy or west of the Rocky Mountains, nor are any of the top 200 Polish or Italian districts.

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Only seven of the top 100 Irish districts are located in the South and five west of the Mississippi River.

The rate of dispersal is also different for different groups. With the exception of two districts on the South Side of Chicago, all of the top 50 Mexican House districts are located along the border. All but one of the top 18 Cuban districts are in south Florida. It is surprising that even today, 157 state legislative districts remain more than half German, most of them in the upper Midwest, but not a single district in the country is half Irish or half Polish. Only three districts in the United States are half Italian, all of them in Providence, Rhode Island.

ONE of the delights of the book is the revelation of unusual ethnic outposts, such as the one enclave of Cubans outside south Florida, in Union City, New Jersey. The only large cluster of Arabs, to take another example, is in Dearborn, Michigan. The state assembly district comprising the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where Al Smith once worked in the Fulton Fish Market, is now 40 percent Chinese, the densest concentration of Chinese in the country. Nearby, in Flushing, Queens, lives the country's largest Korean community. It will come as a surprise to many that three of the top five black-majority districts are located in St. Louis (originally a French and later a German city), likewise that the second and third largest Puerto Rican districts are in Hartford, Connecticut.

The authors use the data to reach a few conclusions about ethnicity and political power in the United States. Their main conclusion is that the wealthier a group is, the more likely it is to be dispersed. In support of this point, they show that the five wealthiest groups, ranked by household income, are Japanese, Chinese, Irish, Arabs, and Asians/Pacific Islanders (again, the double-counting problem), all of which are relatively well-dispersed. The five poorest groups are American Indians, African Americans, Hispanics, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans, all of which are highly concentrated. The only groups that do not fit the pattern are Poles, who are relatively poor (their average household income is below the median) yet well-dispersed, and Cubans, whose average income is just above the median but who are concentrated.

Note what does not account for the disparity between rich groups and poor—not language barriers, which are as great for Japanese as for Mexicans, nor time spent in this country. One

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factor that does distinguish the top from the bottom, though, is education: More than 38 percent of Chinese Americans have a college education, as compared with only 11 percent of Puerto Ricans. Another factor is distance from country of origin. Glazer and Moynihan anticipated that Puerto Ricans would be the ethnic group that fared the worst. In *Beyond the Melting Pot*, they reported that Puerto Ricans in New York City were hampered by the ease, and thus the frequency, with which they could return home. Proximity to country of origin relieves the pressure to assimilate. Mexicans, another large ethnic group with easy access to their homeland, do badly also. Asian immigrants do not have the option to return home easily. Nor, it should be noted, do Cubans, the one Hispanic group whose household income and education level exceeds the national average.

The implications of ethnic dispersal are important, the authors argue, because

> potential political power [for blacks and Hispanics] will increase only if the population group stays geographically clustered. Once the population group ... begins to disperse into the suburbs where most of the rest of the population resides, the potential power base will begin to dilute—just as it did with the Irish and the Italians.

This is true enough, but one wishes the authors had made the larger point. Assimilated white ethnics have something better than potential political power—actual political power. They have it because they are dispersed and assimilated.

The fallacy that ethnic power depends on concentration has great implications for the would-be racial and ethnic gerrymanderers, whose personal political influence is tied to perpetuating electoral segregation for their groups. Congresswomen Cynthia McKinney and Eddie Bernice Johnson are better off if blacks can be lumped together into a few lonely congressional districts, but blacks as a whole might be better off with a voice everywhere. If concentration turns out not to be a precondition for political power, neither is political power a precondition, as traditional liberal thinking would have it, for economic success. Asian and Arab immigrants have scaled the economic ladder, often in the first generation, yet still exert little political influence, even in areas where they are most concentrated.

We will continue to fight over who we are. *The State Atlas of Political and Cultural Diversity* provides the data to make it a meaningful debate.

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Charles Murray's essay in our last issue was based on a paper he wrote for an American Enterprise Institute seminar. Clifford Orwin's essay in the same issue had been presented in the Bradley Lecture Series at AEI.

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